

**SPECIAL  
3RD  
ANNIVERSARY  
ISSUE**

# SPIN

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**TALKING HEADS**  
TALK, TALK, TALK

## **LATIN HIP HOP**

THE COVER GIRLS, NOEL,  
AND AMERICA'S  
NEWEST DANCE SCENE

**EXCLUSIVE:**  
WILLIAM BURROUGHS'  
UNPUBLISHED INTERVIEW  
WITH PATTI SMITH

MEGADETH  
ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN  
L.A. GUNS  
LEGS McNEIL'S MIAMI  
SISTERS OF MERCY  
THE LOST ISSUE OF SPIN

**AIDS: WHY ARE  
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OTHER CAUSES OF  
IMMUNE DEFICIENCY?**

Latin Singer Sa-Fire





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Volume Four Number One

April 1988

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We missed a month, and y'all missed a killer  
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# TOP SPIN

Superimposed over an aerial view of his World Faith Center, the titles indicated that the show was coming from Baton Rouge, Louisiana; and across the bottom of the screen, in type slightly too large, were the words, SPECIAL TELECAST, and you knew right away they were going to air it after all.

The choir sang the opening hymn beautifully. It was celebratory but mournful, and you realized how good the choir was and that you had never noticed that before. (And two days later you would realize why: Because they had never sounded sincere before, even if they were, but today they sounded like they meant it; this time they felt pain.)

When they finished the long hymn, a ministry aide stepped up to the lectern and introduced a soloist who he said was going to sing "The Galilean." "I asked John to sing that this morning. It's one of my favorites," the aide told everyone. Into the solemn atmosphere of the church, John sang "The Galilean," clearly and movingly, in a measured voice that seemed to suspend the congregation in their own sadness and disbelief. As the hymn rose and swelled dramatically, members of the congregation and choir, as they had during the first song, raised their hands in front of them; the Pentecostal sign of feeling the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The aide returned to the lectern and introduced Forest Hall, of the Louisiana District of the Assemblies of God. Hall, buttoning his jacket with one hand and holding a prepared statement in the other, lumbered up to the microphone. When he got there, he proclaimed enigmatically: "Isn't God good?" For a second it caught everyone by surprise. It seemed like the last thing anyone expected to hear, including Hall, who looked as if he'd just thought of it. As what he had said and what response was expected of them sunk into the crowd, they started to answer with "Amen's" and applause. "Doesn't He do good work? Praise the Lord!" continued Hall. More applause and agreement. He prefaced his speech by saying that he and all the District church officials loved Jimmy and Frances Swaggart, and their family, and were praying for them. Then he told of how Swaggart had made a full confession to church officials, of "specific incidents of moral failure."

Somehow, the discovery that Jimmy Swaggart spent time with

prostitutes in motel rooms, which caused his fall from the lofty pulpit he'd built with more than thirty years of fire and brimstone, hit home a lot more impactfully than Jim Bakker's sex scandal. Partly because Swaggart was more righteous and more emphatic in his condemnation of anything less than the strictest adherence to the word of the Bible; and partly because he was a good deal smarter and more charismatic than Bakker. Bakker was always a joke, the head Mickey Mouse at a religious Disneyland. When his affair with Jessica Hahn was exposed it was amusing, like an off-color joke told at a boring party. It served, in part, to discredit the televangelical movement; it dented their industry and set back their dangerously expanding influence. But the Swaggart scandal stunned the country, Christian and secular. It torpedoed the industry. It may well be the event that collapses the evangelical movement as political force, which is, if you'll forgive the irony, a Godsend.

In the end, it is sad, and I think that is what has stunned everyone, because we didn't expect that reaction from ourselves. I was struck by the genuine shock Swaggart was in. He couldn't believe it. His emotional, public act of contrition was too fascinating to be merely something to gloat over. Because it wasn't just the abdication of a smooth TV preacher caught (just about literally) with his pants down. That part is sort of morally uplifting, like hearing of a used car salesman getting busted for turning odometers back. This was the equivalent of watching a pagan people trying to comprehend the death of a Caesar. It was remarkable to witness, and saddening.

Several times throughout his speech the congregation gave him standing ovations, and often arms rose as they had during the singing. When he finished, he turned away and tearfully embraced his wife. Others from the ministry, and District church officials, circled him, and after a long while just holding his family to him, he embraced them too. A ring of red-jacketed ushers formed around the group. The aide who had spoken before now entreated the congregation to come to the front and pray for Jimmy Swaggart. They filed out of the rows and came to the edge of the slightly raised platform and the ones in front knelt and prayed there while the ones behind them stood



Bonnie Schillman/ONYX



R. J. Capole/London Features



John Crawford

silently and bemused. The next day's *New York Times* showed a worshipper all alone, on his knees's, in the empty rows of chairs, bent over either crying or praying.

What struck me watching these proceedings was that this was supposed to have been a religious service and no service took place. The ministry and congregation, whether they realized it or not, effectively put a man ahead of God. And that, I think, was Swaggart's fatal flaw, that he had in essence elevated himself above the God he preached about.

—Bob Guccione, Jr.

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# POINT BLANK

## Letters

### Zeitgeist meister

Dear Bob—

Re: Vol. 3, No. 9 —A smart take on censorship, an anti-PMRC petition, an entertaining lettercol, a parody of rockmag interviews, a rock critic poking massive fun at himself, a white Zulu, neo-bubble gum, real country, born agains, a heavy metal guy playing golf, perceptive and fun-to-read record reviews, rap, Underground, Memphis, proto-hepster Baboon Dooley, Madonna, Aussie band, knock-down intellectual fight on AIDS, Mighty Mouse, gospel sax, popularly subversive Dada, Tony Bennett, the California Raisins—and my favorite, the Alan Moore interview. Lordy, I was in eclectic popular culture heaven. What you got, Bob?—a private outlet into the zeitgeist?

Kevin Miller  
Elmhurst, IL

### Pass the stuffing

What's wrong with you? Get that Zeppelin T-shirt off the turkey! [January] If you want to simulate a turkey—try YOUR photograph.

Elizabeth

Yo! Don't be an asshole and imply that Zeppelin fans are turkeys!

A Zeppelin Fan  
and  
Verbal Vigilante

P.S. Your magazine sucks!

I'm writing to you about that turkey Led Zeppelin ad. I don't know what you're trying to say, but I have a very good idea. Saying that Zeppelin fans are turkeys is one of the worst things you could say. Zeppelin was one of the greatest bands of all time and to call them turkeys is wrong. They had the greatest influence on rock 'n' roll. If you are gonna call anyone a turkey call one of the many shitty groups around today.

Pissed off,  
Brendan Higgins  
Muttontown, NY

Zeplings of the world, lighten up. It was all a horrible misunderstanding.

What we meant to ask by running the ad was this: How could someone who is obviously so happening as to wear a Led Zep T-shirt still not be a subscriber? That was the contradiction we sought to expose. SPIN regrets confusing so very many Zep fans.... Now will you subscribe?

### Big bad mouth

Who the hell is Steven Tyler to talk about the King, Elvis Presley? Saying that "[Elvis] never wrote any songs," is like saying Steven Tyler never took any drugs. And just as bad, Bob Dylan may be "caught up in his own self," but he sure as hell can see through an entire generation's realm. What Steven Tyler needs is some creative enlightenment! I do know that Bob Dylan has, and Elvis Presley sure as hell had, something STEVEN TYLER NEEDS—some down-to-earth soul.

The Hinge  
Boston, MA

### Public enemy number one

I'm a 29-year-old black male professional—medical profession at that. And yes, I thoroughly dig your articles on AIDS and the questionable etiologies surrounding this thing. I even shared that issue with some older, much more conservative colleagues.

But the main issue of this letter is the great justice and cover you guys are giving Public Enemy. Now, I was brought up on the funk, y'know, so I listen to hip hop for the funk. But Chuck D. & Flav do much more than those lame no-names (i.e., Run, Beasties, Fat Boys, etc.). I find the music and the lyrics of P. Enemy to be thought provoking. Nuff said.

H. Boothe, PT  
Danville, VA

### AIDS: Safety first

The article "AIDS: Words from the Front" in your January 1988 issue left me with some frightful feelings regarding the way the general public



"What me worry?"

Henry Porter

might use some of the information presented.

It is important for opposing views to accepted scientific findings to be voiced but in voicing and printing these views, Dr. Duesberg and SPIN must not put a population at increased risk. Statements like, "If you have antibodies, you should be congratulated. You are safe. You don't have to worry about it anymore," may make people think certain high-risk behaviors are now safe and even desirable. It is thought that the antibodies formed after exposure to HIV are not an indicator of protective immunity as most antibodies are. Instead, Selwyn (1986) states, "...HTLV-III antibody is most often a reliable marker for the presence of live, infective virus."

Dr. Duesberg's claims may be true but until he conducts reproducible scientific trials and publishes evidence to prove his claims, all people must be careful to avoid high-risk behavior. Too little is currently known about AIDS and unfortunately the booby prize for ignorance has a high cost...death.

Paula V. Nersesian, R.N.  
Takoma Park, MD

### Celia Farber responds:

Yours is a legitimate concern, but suggesting that HIV may not be the sole cause of AIDS is not the same as promoting sexual promiscuity. What's paralyzing AIDS research is not so much our ignorance of the disease as our incessant refusal to try every avenue until the truth is known with absolute certainty.

Bravo on bringing up a really chilling controversy! Let the truth be known about AIDS.

It seems that MDs are people too. Suppose they happened to miss lecture on that particular day?! Please keep us informed.

Amy Allen  
Ft. Laud, FL

### Whole lotta love

WELCOME BACK!!! It is so, so good to see SPIN on the stands again.

Words fail me!! God, I'm so happy. Most ecstatically yours,  
Lee Ryder  
South Harrow, England



# FLEX APPEAL!

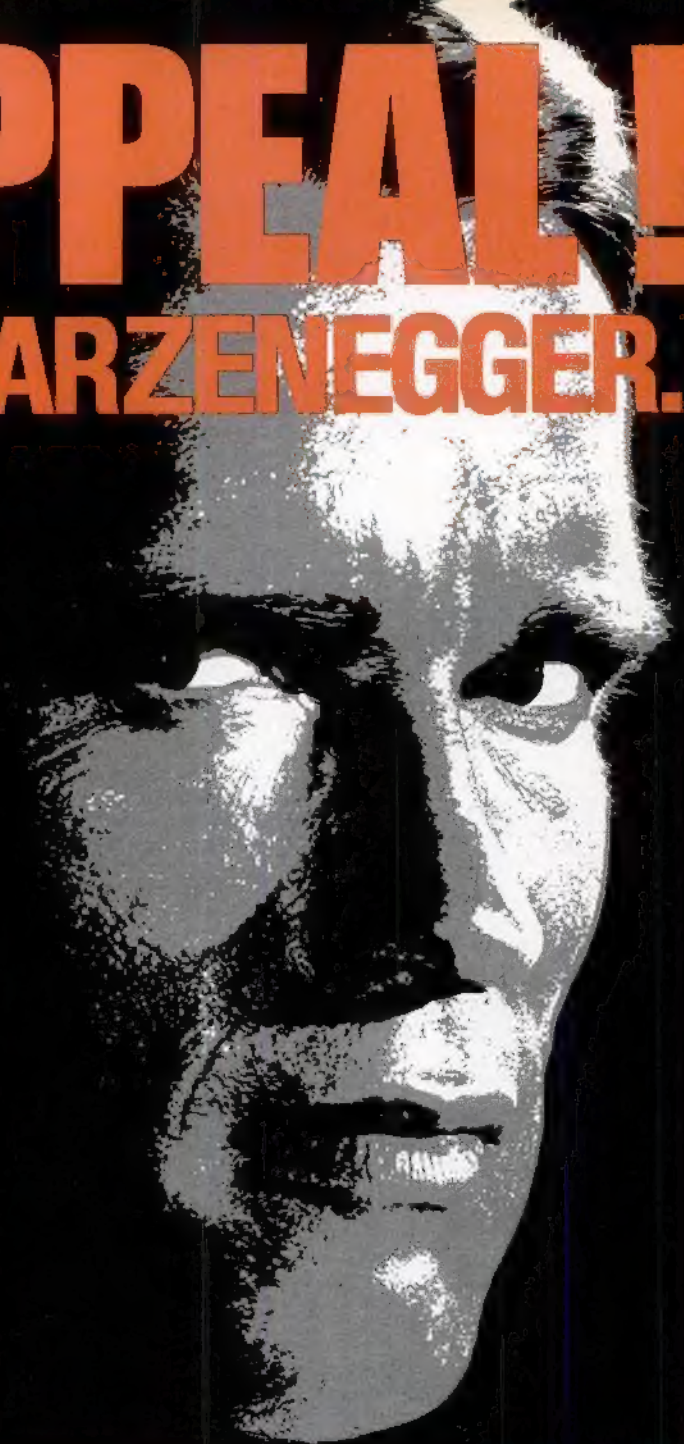
## SWAYZE. SCHWARZENEGGER.

See two *big* stars in two *big* hits...  
coming soon to home video!  
Reserve your copy now!



### STEEL DAWN

PATRICK SWAYZE stars as Nomad in his action-packed follow-up to the mega-smash DIRTY DANCING! He is a desert warrior, carving the future with his sword, and wowing critics like Siskel and Ebert who say, "Swayze has a real screen presence as a genuine action hero." See Swayze sizzle in a performance that runs 'Mad Max' right off the road!



### THE RUNNING MAN

Beefy box-office superstar ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER is running for his life in the critically acclaimed action hit THE RUNNING MAN! Co-starring MARIA CONCHITA ALONSO (MOSCOW ON THE HUDSON) and RICHARD DAWSON, THE RUNNING MAN explodes in a thrilling, high-tech futuristic action-adventure! Take the advice of 'Good Morning America's' Joel Siegel, "Arnold is at his best. Fans, start running."



"...BUT I HAVE TO ADMIT,  
IT'S A RUSH THAT'S NEVER  
BEEN EQUALLED IN MY LIFE.  
I LIKED IT.

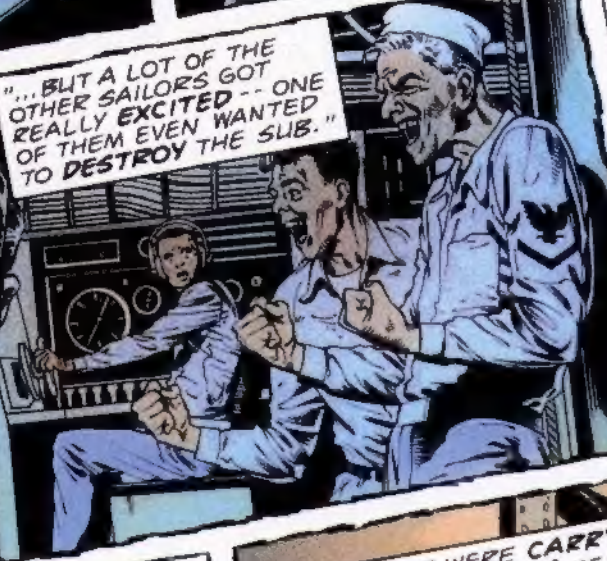


"THEN WE FOUND  
A REAL SOVIET  
SUB ONE DAY, AND  
FOLLOWED IT  
FOR A LONG TIME.



"THAT'S WHEN IT  
STOPPED BEING  
A GAME FOR ME...

"...BUT A LOT OF THE  
OTHER SAILORS GOT  
REALLY EXCITED -- ONE  
THEY EVEN WANTED  
TO DESTROY THE SUB."



AND THAT'S  
WHEN YOU  
REALIZED YOU  
WERE DEALING  
WITH REAL  
LIVES?

THAT,  
TOGETHER WITH  
ANOTHER  
INCIDENT...

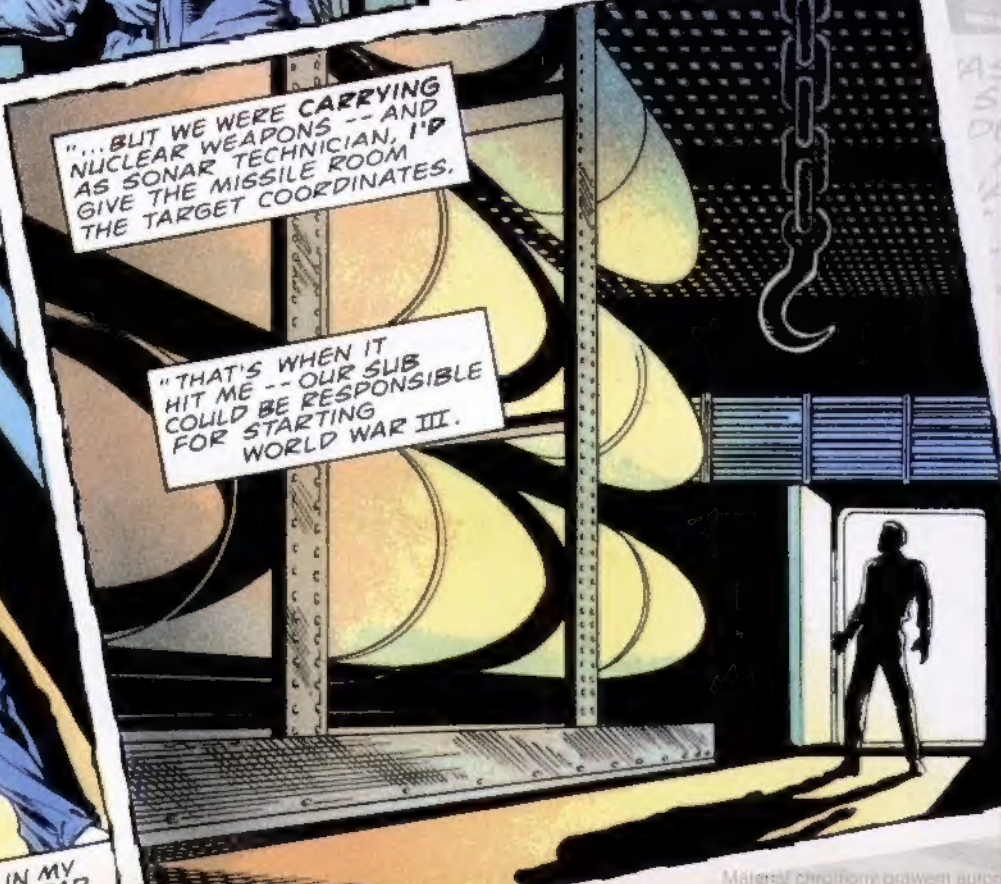


"SOMEWHERE, I PICKED  
UP A BOOK CALLED 'THE  
FATE OF THE EARTH',  
ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF  
A NUCLEAR WAR ON THE  
PLANET.



"...BUT WE WERE CARRYING  
NUCLEAR WEAPONS -- AND  
AS SONAR TECHNICIAN, I'D  
GIVE THE MISSILE COORDINATES.  
THE TARGET COORDINATES.

"THAT'S WHEN IT  
HIT ME -- OUR SUB  
COULD BE RESPONSIBLE  
FOR STARTING  
WORLD WAR III.



OTHER TIME IN MY  
... I'D READ  
... G-



# FLASH

Real War Stories, Sisters of Mercy,  
Banana Consciousness, Falling Evangelist Odds,  
Nocturnal Zoo, Roy Rogers,  
L.A. Guns, Sting

## PAYBACK



©Eclipse Comics 1987

Let's set the record straight. *Real War Stories*, in spite of its title, is not another attempt by comic book publishers to cash in on post-pubescent jingoism. It is, in fact, the antithesis of the decidedly pro-war, us-versus-them tenor of most war comics. Produced by the 40-year-old Philadelphia-based draft counseling group, Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (CCCO), *Real War Stories* takes a frank, often grim look at the reality of war and life and death in the military.

*Real War Stories* is the brainchild of CCCO director Lou Ann Merkle, who, after disgruntled high school students admitted being unmoved by the organization's pamphlets and newsletters, decided to create a more direct and effective means of communicating the facts about worldwide U.S. military intervention. With inestimable help from activist Joyce Brabner and a slew of heavyweight artists and writers, most of whom worked without compensation (including Denny O'Neil, a veteran of over two decades of comic book writing, perhaps best known for his work in *G.I. Joe*), *Real War Stories* was a wild success from the moment it hit the racks last July. The comic's 48 pages contain true-life stories that run the gamut from "The Decision," which details college student Andy Mager's decision to refuse to register for the draft and his resulting six-month prison term, to "False Note"'s study of one woman's struggle with the Army's institutionalized sexism, to Alan Moore's gripping two-part horror story, "Tapestries," based on the writings of Vietnam veteran W. D. Ehrhart. "We made a conscious effort," adds Merkle,

"to speak to a large audience by printing stories that involved different people in different branches of military service. That's why the stories deal with a black man, a woman, a college student, and military involvements that focus not only on Vietnam, but Grenada and Central America too."

Despite the critical and commercial accolades, issue number two is not immediately in the offing. "There's no doubt that we have enough material to do a monthly comic," she notes, "but right now it's still up in the air." The good news is that Brabner is taking the concept a step further in three projects soon to see the light of day: comics concerned with the work of the Christian public interest law firm, the Christic Institute; the G.I. advocacy group, Citizen Soldier; and one that will deal with the experiences of children of war.

But are kids reading and responding to *Real War Stories*? "Absolutely," Merkle enthuses. "In fact I met a kid who worked in a comic store in New York who was all ready to join the Airborne Rangers. He read the comic, wasn't knocked out at first, but one night he called me. We talked for an hour about the stories and his reactions to them. He told me, 'It's so hard for me to believe that we're killing people for profit.' The stories really made him think. I told him to do some more research, don't just believe everything I've told you, go out and make up your own mind. Not long after our talk, he called back to tell me he wasn't joining up. That was proof we're on the right track."

—John Dougan



# MERCY MISSION

As the leader of the Sisters of Mercy, Andrew Eldritch has every reason to be arrogant. With Patricia Morrison, formerly a bassist with the Bags and Gun Club, and Doktor Avalanche, a drum machine named after a Swiss soccer official, Andrew has created *Floodland*, an LP of perfectly crafted songs. "At least what comes across in the stuff we do, even though it's considered as being far too contemporary, is a respect for songs," says Andrew. He won't categorize the music (a convenient though inadequate label is synth-pop) except to say, "Good songs." Why the sudden modesty? "They're good songs," he replies. "I'm not that arrogant because I try to write great songs. But I know for a fact that everyone else writes bad songs."

Andrew's forte is writing songs which describe a mood, a certain feeling, or a single isolated moment, like sitting in a bar and observing the action around you. No boy-meets-girl narratives here. The tone is urgent, bleak, and at times melancholy, and the drug of

choice is Methedrine. "It's really dangerous stuff," Andrew says. "It's like eighth gear. I remember a time in Philadelphia, and then I remember another time in Philadelphia a week later, and I remember wondering to myself what might have happened in the interim."

Like Andrew, Patricia feels comfortable with "the darker side of life. It never seems evil to me," she says. "It's the brighter things that put me on edge." Andrew finds comfort in "the beauty of horror," twentieth-century artifacts like SS uniforms, the atomic bomb, and napalm. "Natural beauty is pretty boring," he says. "It doesn't have that synthetic kick." Which is why a drum machine is perfect for Sisters of Mercy. According to Andrew, all of the drummers they'd like to record with are already booked or dead. He blames Ringo Starr for the lack of good drummers. "We've got [all we need] in a box," he says. "Why do we need something made of puny flesh-and-blood?"

—Jack Rosenberger

## IS THAT A BANANA IN YOUR PANTS?

On November 6, PBS aired an educational program on AIDS. The following is a letter ■ Bruce Christensen, president of PBS, from Robert M. Moore, president of the International Banana Association.

Dear Mr. Christensen,

In this program, a banana is used ■ a substitute for a human penis in a demonstration of how condoms should be used.

I must tell you, Mr. Christensen, as I have told representatives of WETA, that our industry finds such usage of our product to be totally unacceptable. The choice of a banana rather than some other inanimate prop constitutes arbitrary and reckless disregard for the unsavory association that will be drawn by the public and the damage to our industry that will result therefrom.

The banana is an important product and deserves to be treated with *respect and consideration*. It is the most extensively consumed fruit in the United

States, being purchased by over 98 percent of households. It is important to the economies of many developing Latin American nations. The banana's continued image in the minds of consumers as a healthful and nutritious product is critically important to the industry's continued ability to be held in such high regard by the public and to discharge its responsibilities to its Latin American hosts.

Unfortunately, WETA categorically refused my request to view the offensive sequence, citing policies established by PBS.

Mr. Christensen, I have no alternative but to advise you that we intend to hold PBS fully responsible for any and all damages sustained by our industry ■ a result of the showing of this AIDS program depicting the banana in the associational context planned. Further, we reserve all legal rights to protect the industry's interests from this arbitrary, unnecessary, and insensitive action.

Yours very truly,  
Robert M. Moore

THIS ALBUM SPEAKS  
LOUDER THAN WORDS.



Produced by David Rhodes  
and I. Bone Burnett  
Columbia Records Inc. © 1988 CBS Records Inc.





Courtesy/Hitman Records

Sisters of Mercy: "When I met Andrew the first thing he said was, 'Patricia, you will never meet anyone more arrogant than I am.'"

## Falling Evangelist Odds

Last year it was Jim and Tammy Bakker. Then television evangelist Jimmy Swaggart, who had condemned Jim as being "a cancer on the body of Christ," was forced from the pulpit. With a little help from Satan himself, SPIN offers the following odds on who will be the next television evangelist to fall from grace.

Contenders	Odds	Intangibles
Pat Robertson	3:2	Can't go back.
Oral Roberts	3:2	Why do you think they call him Oral?
Jerry Falwell	2:1	Too big for his britches.
Robert Schuller	4:1	Wimp syndrome.
Billy Graham	8:1	Possible link to the SF psychedelic scene.
James Robison	10:1	Coming on strong.
Gospel Bill	12:1	Questionable name.
Ben Kinchlow	20:1	Pinch-hitter for Robertson.
George Vandeman	30:1	Nice clothes.
Dr. Gene Scott	50:1	The Morton Downey, Jr. of religion.

YOU ARE ALREADY INVOLVED.



"Diesel and Dust is what we breathe.  
This land don't change and we don't leave..."

"Diesel and Dust" The powerful new album from Australia's No. 1 group, Midnight Oil. It will fuel your conscience and fire up your passion. Make no mistake. This is an album where music is the issue as well as the medium.

MIDNIGHT OIL. "DIESEL AND DUST"

Featuring the urgent first track, "Beds Are Burning."  
On Columbia Records, Cassettes and Compact Discs.

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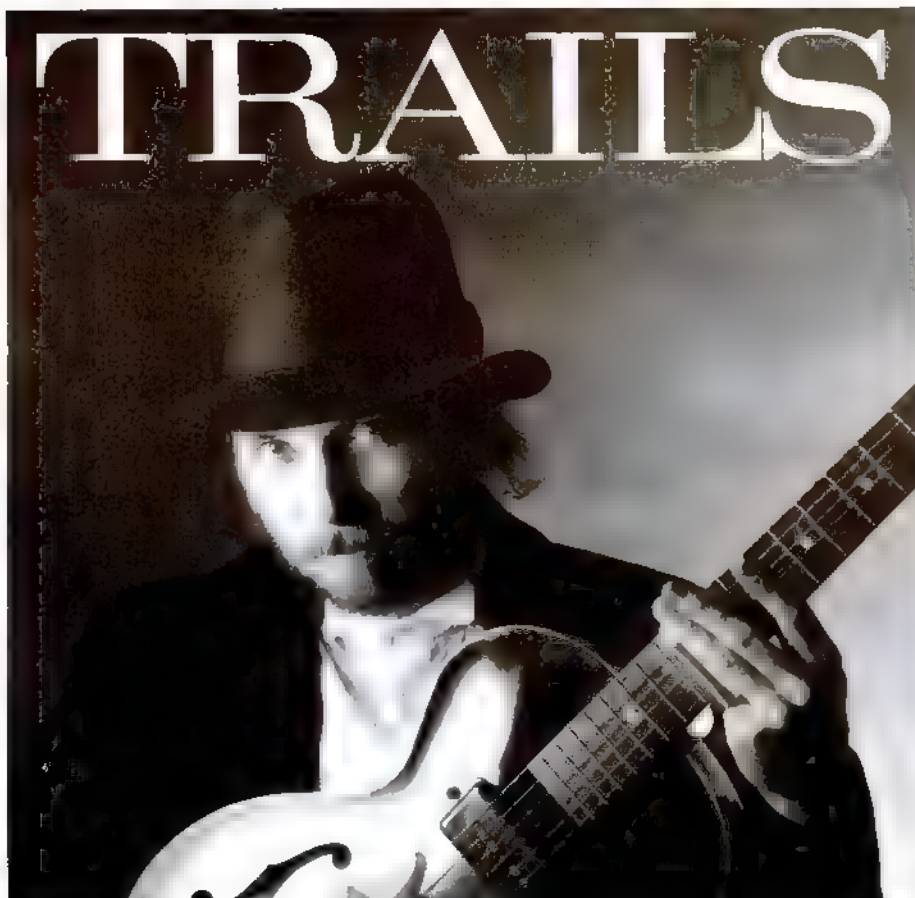
# ZOOLOGY

They say that no two snowflakes are identical, that even leaves from the same tree are different. So when Nocturnal Zoo, a moody melodic pop band from Newport News, Virginia, set about making their first album, they didn't want every cover to be the same. Members of the band, along with friends and families, hand-painted the first 300 covers, each with a different design. The music, sounding very much like the Doors filtered through Echo and the Bunnymen and Killing Joke, is pretty swell too; if they catch on, they'll be up to their knees in fingerpaints.

—Brian Cullman



# HAPPY TRAILS



Roy Rogers? If you've caught John Lee Hooker and his Coast to Coast Blues Band, no doubt you've noticed the skinny guy with the scraggly beard wailing on slide guitar. That's the real Roy Rogers.

His older brother used to watch *The Roy Rogers Show* and "my parents thought it would be cute to name me after him," says Rogers. "Having this name certainly hasn't hurt me as a musician. I mean, there's instant name recognition. A lot of people wonder, 'Who is this guy, really?'" Rogers's first solo LP, *Chops Not Chaps*, does include a fifty-second version of "Happy Trails," but the music is Mississippi Delta blues, not country-and-western.

Rogers's father bought him a \$25 Stella guitar when he was twelve and around that time he heard his first blues record, Robert Johnson's "Crossroads," and "I knew this was the kind of music I wanted to play," says Rogers.

On *Chops Not Chaps*, Rogers performs his own songs, some of Johnson's, and Elmore James's "Shake Your Money Maker," but the music, Rogers says, "is pure Roy Rogers. I'm a musician, not an archivist or a purist."

His newest LP, *Slidewinder*, on Blind Pig Records, sounds the way good bourbon tastes, smooth and with a kick. It's definitely a "blues" album, but one that owes as much to Robert Cray as to Robert Johnson. Part of that is due to production help by Scott Matthews and Ron Nagle, and it's also because Rogers has no aversion to the miracles of modern recording.

Rogers recently returned from Scandinavia, where he toured with his band, the Delta Rhythm Kings, and from Alaska where he was performing with Norton Buffalo as an acoustic duo. He's currently producing the next John Lee Hooker album, and has already recorded sessions with Robert Cray, George Thorogood, Charles Musselwhite, and members of Canned Heat. Says Rogers, "This year is John's 40th anniversary in the business, so I'd really like to see the record get on a major label, one that would push it. Maybe with the names we have, someone will, but it's already a great record regardless of who sits in on it."

—Kirby Desha





## ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN

Here's something special for Echoheads everywhere. A 12" maxi-single with a remix by Ivan Ivan of "Bedbugs And Ballyhoo" plus previously unreleased live cover versions of The Velvet Underground's "Run, Run, Run" (also on the 7"), Television's "Friction" and The Rolling Stones' "Paint It Black." And, as if the upcoming U.S. election isn't enough, Echo & The Bunnymen have promised to tour again in '88.

# WARNER BROS. RECORDS

## MUSIC OF THE MONTH CLUB



## THE MIGHTY LEMON DROPS

### WORLD WITHOUT END

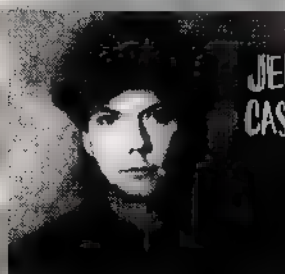
Nutritionists recommend consuming enormous quantities of Mighty Lemon Drops. It's a good thing Sire Records (a company which has your health in mind) is releasing a third Lemon Drops LP this March to satisfy hungry music fans with good taste. The album was produced by Tim Palmer (of Zodiac Mind Warp, Wire Train and The Mission) and features the single "Inside Out."



## MARTINI RANCH

### HOLY COW

Gadzoos! The multi-talented Martinis (Andrew Todd and Bill Paxton) check in with *Holy Cow*, their long-awaited first album, on the heels of their 1986 maxi-single "How Can The Labouring Man Find Time For Self-Culture?" The first single is called "Reach." The video features several of Bill Paxton's "Aliens" co-stars, plus Bud Cort, Judge Reinhold and some leggy tarantulas.



## JERRY HARRISON: CASUAL GODS

### CASUAL GODS

Talking Head Jerry Harrison puts his musician hat back on after wearing his producer hat for the BoDeans' acclaimed second album. This time it's for his second solo LP, *Casual Gods*, which puts Harrison in the studio with such esteemed players as Chris Spedding, Bernie Worrell and Robbie McIntosh. The single is "Rev It Up."

## JANE SIBERRY

### THE WALKING

Unless you've heard Jane Siberry's music, you've never experienced anything like it. Share Jane's special vision on her Reprise debut, *The Walking*, which features such outstanding tracks as "Ingrid (And The Footman)" and the title song.



## THE DYNATONES

### SHAMELESS

Brzen. Outrageous. *Shameless*. Yes, it's the Warner Bros. debut of the mighty Dynatoness—longtime favorites of discriminating party-ers across the nation. Get movin' 'n groovin' with the D-tones' first single, "Take The Heat!"



## UNDERWORLD

### UNDERNEATH THE RADAR

Sire Records' Chief A&R Spehunker recently went digging in search of a Great Band. The expedition ended at the bottom of a mine shaft with a band called Underworld. A one-take live recording resulted in their debut album, now enabling you to hear this Great Live Band in the comfort of your own home or automobile. *Underneath The Radar* features the 7" single of the same name; the maxi is remixed by Shep Pettibone.



## DEPECHE MODE

Music for the masses is right. In a mere 11 nights in 1987, Depeche Mode did it live for more than 140,000 ecstatic U.S. fans. In the spring of 1988 they will return for another tour. Meantime, satisfy your Mode-mania with a very special 12" and cassette maxi-single containing Shep Pettibone and Beatmasters remixes of "Behind The Wheel" and "Route 66" (yes, that "Route 66"). And don't forget the 7" remixes of same, also on cassette.



## TALKING HEADS

### NAKED

World class musical innovators, Byrne and company have delivered yet another long player to stretch the envelope of rock's expressive potential. Recorded in Paris, *Naked*, according to Byrne, blends "jazz, tangos, sambas, weird branches of rap and an Algerian-Moroccan pop hybrid called Zouk." Produced by Steve Lillywhite of U2 and Peter Gabriel fame, *Naked* features an international cast of guest artists and some of the most intriguing originals in the band's recorded catalog.

### BRINGING HOME

#### THE ASHES

The name calls to mind images of graceful, shimmering, alluring creatures—and those words also describe the sound of The Wild Swans, four British musicians poised to take America by storm. Performances throughout Europe left cults of loyal Wild Swans fans begging for more; their Paul Hardman-produced debut album should achieve the same results in this country.

## THE WILD SWANS



MUTE RECORDS

SIRE

WARNER BROS. RECORDS

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# GUN CLUB



## YAKETY-YAK

"My idea of a perfect folk song is something in a minor key with a tragic ending—preferably suicide or madness. Something with no chorus. Something with sex and violence."

—Suzanne Vega

"Our rider states that we must have Yoo-Hoo in our dressing room wherever we play, no substitutes accepted. When people come backstage at a Ramones gig, I offer them a Yoo-Hoo, especially the people I like."

—Joey Ramone

"I'm nearly 29. I'll be dead in a couple of years."

—Patrick Morrissey

"I wanted to play drums but they were too loud. That's why everybody ends up playing guitar. Isn't it?"

—Michael Gregory

Los Angeles metal bands tend to be incestuous, but this is ridiculous. You see, first there was L.A. Guns. Then the singer split and formed Guns N' Roses. The bass player from Faster Pussycat and the drummer from W.A.S.P. joined, and they got a new singer who used to play with the guitarist from Def Leppard. And now there's L.A. Guns again, the latest in the new wave of Los Angeles metal-flavored garage bands that owe as much to punk as to Led Zep.

"Our first gig," recalls guitarist Mick Cripps, "was two years ago, about four days after we decided to form this band. It was at a punk club. If you think we're raw now, then we would just get up and be animalistic. It was really gritty. It was crazy though, because nobody else was doing it, and no one could figure out what the hell we were doing. But we kept doing it."

**L.A. Guns:** (L-R) Kelly Nickels, Mick Cripps, Steve Riley, Traci Guns, Philip Lewis.

It caught on. Last year, while record companies waged a bidding war for Guns N' Roses, L.A. Guns quietly signed to PolyGram/Virgo. Their new, self-titled debut album gives a boozy nod to just about every great band that ever existed—including the Sex Pistols—all in glorious lo-fi. This album needs tarting up just to be a clean garage record. And therein lies its charm.

"This is what we are," says bassist Kelly Nickels. "If we went in and made a high-tech, super polished album, then what would we have done next? It wouldn't have been us. We're casualties. So we sound like it."

—Sharon Liveterr



# THE REAL STING

THIS IS A STORY ABOUT A MAN CALLED STING... NO, NOT THE POSTURING SPOT MOST PEOPLE THINK OF WHEN YOU MENTION "STING." THIS IS A STORY ABOUT THE REAL STING, MY GOOD FRIEND, THE FINEST MAN I'VE EVER KNOWN...



I FIRST MET THE REAL STING BACK IN THE LATE '70'S WHEN I WAS CALLED IN TO DO SOME P.R. WORK FOR A NEW ROCK COMBO FROM SOUTH JERSEY CALLED "THE POLICE"... THEY WERE RECORDING THEIR FIRST LP...  
... THE REAL STING WAS A REBEL, A VISIONARY WHO INSISTED ON INCLUDING A 50-MINUTE VERSION OF "BE-BOP-A-LULA" SONG ENTIRELY IN FRENCH...

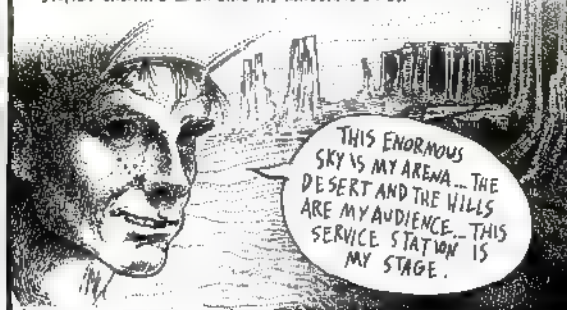


... HE WAS EXPELLED FROM THE GARDEN AND REPLACED BY A LOOK-ALIKE ACTOR FROM L.A. WHO HAD DONE SOME COMMERCIALS AND SOAP OPERAS...

THE REAL STING NOW LIVES IN SOUTH DAKOTA AND WORKS AS A GAS STATION... HE BEARS BITTERNESS TOWARD THE PATHETIC MAN WHO NOW STRUGGLES FALSELY UNDER THE NAME "STING," A MAN WHOSE SONGS ARE WRITTEN FOR HIM BY A CONSORTIUM OF TIN PAN ALLEY HACKS, AND WHOSE VOCALS ARE DUBBED—BOTH ON RECORD AND IN CONCERT—BY MEL TORME...



... SOMETIMES MY WIFE AND I DRIVE OUT THERE, JUST TO CHAT WITH STING AND TO HEAR HIM SING AS HE FILLS OUR TANK, FOR ALTHOUGH HE HAS NO INTEREST IN RECORDING OR ATTEMPTING A "COMEBACK," STING HAS NEVER STOPPED CREATING HIS WONDERFUL SONGS.



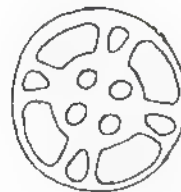
A DANIEL/DEAN WOMEN PRODUCTION



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"The Woodentops are the freshest, most infectious band to come out of England in some time." —*Philadelphia Inquirer*

"The 'Tops distill the essence of all that's smart and swell about pop..." —*Star Hits*

"It's wildly eclectic music, yet imminently accessible, played for keeps." —*Boston Globe*

The Woodentops are Rob, Simon Mawby, Benny Staples, Frank De Freitas and Anne Stephenson.

Additional Musicians are Gary Lucas (Captain Beefheart), Berni Worrel (P-Funk, Talking Heads) and Doug Wimbish (Mick Jagger, Yachthead).

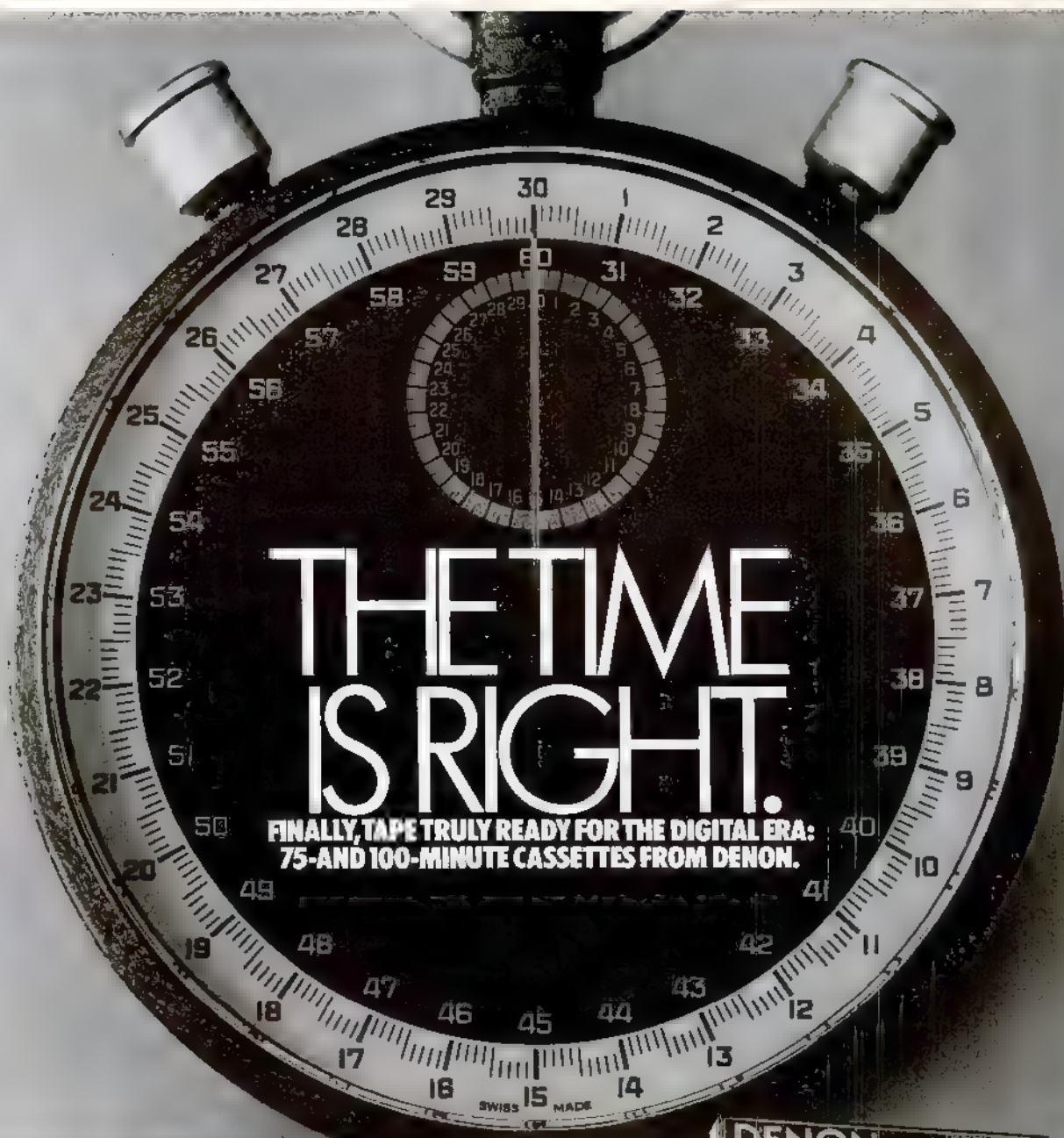
**THE WOODENTOPS. "WOODEN FOOT COPS ON THE HIGHWAY."**

**Their new album. On Columbia Records, Cassettes and Compact Discs.**

Produced by Scott Litt and Rob. Management: Seb Shelton. "Columbia," are trademarks of CBS Inc. © 1988 CBS Records Inc.







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# SPINS

## SPINS:

Live Skull  
The Communards  
John Zorn  
Foreigner  
Firehose  
Spoonie Gee  
Django Reinhardt  
Will Sexton  
Branford Marsalis  
The Young Rascals  
EIEIO  
James Taylor  
Keith Jarrett  
Ofra Haza



Monica Dae

## Platter du Jour

**Live Skull**  
*Dusted*  
Homestead

The debut of Live Skull Mark II at CBGB's during last summer's New Music Seminar was a howling gale of sonic-stun guitar harmonics and emotional intensity. Everyone left talking about Thalia Zedek, whose previous bands, Uzi and Dangerous Birds, made big noise on the underground. Live Skull always let the lacerating guitars of Mark C. and Tom Paine do the talking; the band never had a real frontperson, and Zedek's singing matched the elemental force of the band's guitar assault with nothing but shredding vocal cords, raw nerve, and what seemed to be a limitless reservoir of rage.

But there's been a fundamental shift of focus in Live Skull's music that Zedek's forceful presence doesn't entirely account for. The band is rocking more and droning less. The new songs revel in a fevered lyricism I'd be

tempted to call delirious, if the layered guitar parts that provide this music's equivalent of pop-song hooks weren't so carefully, coolly calibrated.

Now that bassist and sometime-vocalist Marnie Greenholz has left the band (reportedly lured by Anton Fier's siren-song into the reconstituted Golden Palominos), and now that Thalia Zedek has also gone off, there's even more reason to attribute at least some of Live Skull's recent musical changes to the new drummer, Rich Hutchins. Rich has replaced the departed James Lo's street-beat abstractions with a fuller cymbal sound and unabashed rock 'n' roll sensibility. But however you figure it, the band-in-transition that recorded *Dusted*—core guitarists C. and Paine, bassist Greenholz, throat-scorching Zedek, and Hutchins, replaced on a couple of cuts by Lo—has made one storming, stirring, vi-

ciously lyrical motherfucker of an album.

Live Skull had the misfortune to emerge from New York's art/punk axis just as Sonic Youth was looming and moving from strength to strength. Both were guitar bands that made guitars sound fresher and slash nastier than any synthesizer. Both had roots in no wave's noise-mongering and shared a fondness for lurid, sometimes gruesome lyric imagery. Both were quartets with a female bassist-vocalist center-stage, flanked by two guitarists who transcended lead/rhythm role-playing and the rock-harmony rulebooks.

But from the first, the differences between the two bands outweighed the similarities. Sonic Youth relied on an arsenal of junk-shop guitars, unconventional tunings, and finely honed group rave-ups. Live Skull favored higher-tech equipment—including some judiciously employed effects boxes and other tonal modifiers—and tight arrangement's rigorously executed, with minimal improvisation. They also favored conventional guitar tunings, and that had a lot to do with the most fundamental distinction between Live Skull and Sonic Youth. SY's clanging, chiming guitars seem to resonate in an immense, empty space. LS's guitars define a lapidary sonic architecture, a dream-space whose perspective and depth of field shimmer in perpetual flux.

Homestead Records honcho Gerard Cosloy has described the more supercharged Live Skull that emerges on *Dusted* as "Television in overdrive," and the comparison to Tom Verlaine's ringing, revelatory sounds isn't as far-fetched as it might seem. Television's poetry of shimmering interference patterns and harmonic sustain built on the trailblazing work of the Velvet Underground; the musicians who left pioneering trance-drone composer La Monte Young's mid-Sixties ensemble to help form the Velvets shared Young's conviction that the resonating harmonic field generated by overdriven amplifiers and vibrating strings is truly the Music of the Spheres. Young believes certain harmonic matrices present the listener with insights into "fundamental vibrational structures." The Velvets, then Television, refined and systematized the "dreamweapon" of sonic-stun guitar-band rock—it's a New York tradition.

Sonic Youth and Live Skull are the next step, sound on the threshold of incandescence. These bands have their dark sides, but they burn with a pure brilliance. *Dusted* might light up your life; it might set your turntable on fire.

—Robert Palmer

Above: Live Skull guitarist Mark C.





## The Communards Red MCA

When disco was the rage in the mid-Seventies, the reigning divas were black women with names like Donna, Patli, Thelma. Today there's a white male soprano named Jimmy Somerville. It's risky for anyone to remake a giant hit like Gloria Gaynor's "Never Can Say Goodbye," but Somerville does a terrific job. Rather than camping it up, the lead singer of the Communards does the song straight ahead, a tribute to disco's golden era.

Most of *Red*, the Communards' second LP, is original material, penned by Somerville and keyboardist Richard Coles. Side one opens with Somerville blazing through four hot dance tunes. On "Matter of Opinion" he squeals into the high registers and whoops over the female backup singers. His timing is perfect when rephrasing the chorus on "There's More to Love than Boy Meets Girl," (whose lyrics assume double meanings when done by this gay duo). Somerville is a great vocalist, but he's not the whole show: Coles's rickety-tickety synthesizers on "Victims" and tingly keyboards on "Tomorrow" underscore his important role—pumping out the dance beat.

Side one can be cathartic. I dance my ass off, then have a good cry during the last cut, "For a Friend," a touching ballad about loss and recovery. Although it's not stated, the song is clearly about AIDS and is a four-tissue ballad.

Now if only side two were as cohe-

sive. The material is good but segues from disco to a pretty ballad, "Lovers and Friends," then to a jazzy number, then closes with two ballads. The mixture just doesn't gel, although "C Minor," a classic torch song, features Somerville's pleading histrionics about surviving a wounded heart.

*Red* is decent musically, but it's tame politically and doesn't live up to its title (a reference to the Communards' socialist position). Though weaker than the Communards' sizzling debut album, at least you can dance to this during the revolution.

—Kate Walter

## John Zorn Spillane Nonesuch

A woman screams (cut). Lounge jazz (cut). Title theme (fade up and out). Dogs barking... sirens (cut). That's the beginning of "Spillane," the title piece that runs the entire first side of John Zorn's most recent album. Like a movie soundtrack, where disparate music fragments are just one element amid spoken dialogue and sound effects, "Spillane" makes continual abrupt shifts, evoking private eye imagery. The quick-cut sensibility of film editing provides the structure for much of Zorn's music. He uses elaborate game rules to organize interactions between musicians in free improvisations. Or he composes brief musical passages notated on file cards, then carefully orders them into a stack to form a composition, freely changing genres and instrumentation

from one moment to the next. On Hal Wilner's anthology of music by Kurt Weill, and last year on *The Big Gundown*, his tribute to Ennio Morricone, Zorn has achieved wider recognition by applying his style of audio montage to the music of other composers.

Rather than splice together bits of sound into the kind of tape composition that electronic composers have been constructing for decades, Zorn prefers to challenge a small group of improvisers to perform the segued disjunctures live. On "Spillane," fake jazzman John Lurie recites a Mike Hammer parody written by Arto Lindsay ("If your brain waited this long to talk to your hand, a cigarette would burn right through your fingers"). Orchestras, choirs, and a cinematic wash of sound images are sampled from keyboards, compact discs, and tape, and the band (led by Zorn on sax and clarinet, and Bill Frisell on guitar) travels a wide variety of barroom moods, from cocktail jazz to blues, honky tonk, and gutbucket striptease.

The two pieces on side two are also homages, but they suffer from trying to assimilate musicians from other genres. "Two Lane Highway" is an extended setting for blues guitarist Albert Collins that lacks the narrative punch of a straight blues. And on "Forbidden Fruit," a tribute to Japanese film star Ishihara Yujiro, the Kronos Quartet (with additional

strings sampled from turntables by Christian Marclay) execute high-res, change-the-channels improvisation with flat results. Zorn is at his best when he applies his collage methods to an identifiable theme, enriching the tradition that groups powerful improvisers around a unique talent. And that tradition runs from (A)rmstrong to (Z)orn.

—John Picarella

## Foreigner Inside Information Atlantic

Let's face facts—we all hate Foreigner. We hate every platinum record inch of their bodies. They sell zillions, fill arenas worldwide, and everyone (except your kid brother) despises them. It's not just their success that makes Foreigner so unlikable; other groups sell and critics love them. Because bands like AC/DC or Van Halen don't seem all that serious, critics accept them. Those groups are cool. Foreigner, on the other hand, is perceived as being very serious. The inside jacket photo on *Inside Information* shows them heavily shadowed and unsmiling. Foreigner does what it does album after album, without a hell of a lot of individual flash or style (quick, what does Lou Gramm look like?). Foreigner is the anti-cool.







What exactly is Foreigner's crime? They provide a constant diet of heavy riffs, always coming up with catchy songs. *Inside Information* has songs tailor-made for car radios and MTV Heavy Rotation. The band's accused of sexist macho posturing; no argument there. Lyrical subject matter tends to revolve around Foreigner's problems with "she"s. These "she"s are calculating, cold, evil, but always "know what you want." Women in Foreigner songs always know what you want. That alone is not enough to indict them, for as Springsteen has his little girls, Mick Jones and Lou Gramm have those "she"s. Musically, Jones doesn't have a distinctive style, but pulls off some memorable guitar leads. Gramm has a strong rock-guy voice. The record features state-of-the-art production, and sounds crisp.

Is this the problem? That Foreigner's good at what they do? Is it their fault no one can name the rhythm section? Or remember if they're English or not? In an age where bands are condemned for seemingly existing only on charisma, do we deride Foreigner for their apparent lack of any? So, they're sort of boring and faceless; *Inside Information* still ain't a half bad piece-o-vinyl. There are plenty of folks who don't think being a good AOR rocker is a goal worth striving for, but when Foreigner decides to turn it on, they can produce four- to five-minute slices of FM rock heaven.

—Amy Linden

### Firehose If'n SST

Sometimes I think the best way to approach Firehose is to pretend that the Minutemen never existed; only because comparisons between the two are unfair, disingenuous, and inevitable. The Minutemen's funkified post-h-core was politicized ass-shake, as defined by D. Boon's adroit string-bending and throaty bellow—tense stuff. Unfortunately, it's also a memory. Firehose's edges are a little

smoother and less jittery, due in part to Ed Fromohio's (né Crawford) folksy bent, tuneful singing, and more linear (and less overtly polemical) approach to song construction. This, however, doesn't mean they don't kick out some serious jams, or offer a trenchant analysis or two. Fact is, *If'n* realizes the promise of their auspicious debut, *Ragin' Full-On*, and ups the ante, proving once and for all that these dudes live in the shadow of no one.

Ed F. still functions as front hoser, but Mike Watt and George Hurley are still, unsurprisingly, the steam that powers this engine. Sounding like a mutant cross between Blue Oyster Cult's Bouchard Bros. and Parliament's funk-hunk smashers Cordell Mosson and Jerome Brailey (spin *Tyranny and Mutation* and *P-Funk Earth Tour* back-to-back for full effect), they splank in a synchronous fury that will sear your cerebellum. Take, for instance, the LP's opener "Sometimes." As Ed's beefier-than-before git slams out a Led Zep-ish riff, Hurley scatters rolls across his top kit, while Watt pushes the whole shootin' match with a delicious descending bass line that I've been humming constantly, much to my wife's chagrin, for weeks now.

If'n there's a point where *If'n* stumbles, it's lyrically. Watt and Hurley proffer their standard epigrammatic imagism that, while bereft of bullshit, occasionally lacks completeness. Ed F.'s earnest contributions (only three tracks) tend to be stiff, although his "In Memory of Elizabeth Cotton," is an affecting tribute, more for the melancholy acoustic picking, arid lead vocal, and terrific harmony from Phranc, than for his "I'm hearing that ol' freight train" lyrics. Actually, some of the LP's best writing comes from Watt's significant other, ex-Black Flag bassist Kira, whose "Anger" reaches the boiling point without succumbing to fill-in-the-blanks nihilistic hyperbole.

The great thing about Firehose is that they seem willing to take risks and create tension, by just being themselves. *If'n*'s not going to convert anyone who hasn't already been hepped to their vibe; in fact, it may alienate those too impatient to absorb the increased folkie baggage, or more expansive song formats. But that kind of agitation is why, warts and all, I'm hangin' around. And if you gave a damn you'd be hangin' with me.

—John Dougan

### Spoonie Gee The Godfather Tuff City

"Take It Off," says rap artist Spoonie Gee. He really pushes the words, like he thinks he can strip the clothes off her just using his voice. He raps all



about love and sexual prowess, but his voice gives you frustration. He mixes, like, eighteen emotions at once. He's been punched out—his words tell you that in so many ways. He wants to be a lover, but it's a fight.

Spoonie Gee's voice is a great rhythm instrument. But his rhythm just drives forward, doesn't respond to or direct anything outside itself. It has nothing to do with funk music's un-

derlying call-and-response. The only way to produce him is to augment what he does, to get out of his way. So when producers Marley Marl, Aaron Fuchs, and Teddy Riley bring things down to the rhythm, they bring it down to his voice. Fuchs and Marl go for immediate impact: a loose charging funk, usually; or some mesmerizing reggae. Riley's more subtle: His arrangements kind of dance around Spoonie Gee's voice. The voice stays center. The words stay center, too. The words are drums; they have beats: "He'll pop you, stop you, then he'll drop you." That's heavyweight Mike Tyson. "This girl ain't gonna/make me or break me/She might shake me." That's Spoonie's girlfriend. "You'll wind up flat on your back like the canvas is your bed." That's if you go against Tyson. Go against Spoonie, girl, and your bed is the canvas.

—Frank Kogan



Upper left: Jimmy Somerville and Richard Coles of the Communards: Disco divas for the age of safe sex. Lower left: Quick-change artist John Zorn shares a quiet moment with his wardrobe. Left: Firehose bassist Mike Watt.



# Get warped!



**Django Reinhardt**  
*Djangologie/USA Vols. 1-7*  
 DRG/Swing Records

Gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt offers an early modern (read post-phonograph) example of how pop music travels from its native habitat, is heard through alienated ears, and yields a hybrid no one could have foreseen. Introduced to jazz by an avant-artist pal who played him Louis Armstrong records, entranced by the discs of early jazz guitar-violin duos like Eddie Lang and Joe Venuti, Django and his patrician fiddler/co-conspirator Stephane Grappelli took their models and infused them with a jaunty but fiery feel, a lyrical touch of Old World melancholy and knowingness that was consonant with but distinct from the blues underlying the best of early American jazz. In less impressionistic terms, where Lang had hung his pioneering stabs at guitar solos largely around his chordal work, where fellow trailblazer Lonnie Johnson had leaned on blues-derived pentatonics, Django played with brooding Eastern European modalities, broke those chords open into arpeggios and ran them into twisty, spidery figures that belied how three fingers of his left hand had been welded together in a gypsy caravan fire.

The results changed the whole nature of the guitar as an instrument; only Charlie Christian, who a few years later would introduce the electric guitar to jazz and with it the possibility of the guitarist using long, hornlike, scale-based lines, had a similar impact at the time. To put it even further into context: B. B. King credits Django's records with helping to teach him certain techniques, like tremolo and swooping note bends, that younger rock and blues players have been copying from him ever since. Other key Django traits were equally seminal. His manic right-hand slashing at the chords while his left hand was sliding around the fretboard and his flight-of-the-bumblebee single-string picking filtered into rock via disciple Les Paul and his followers like Jeff Beck and Jerry Garcia. His famed use of octaves in the final chorus of "Sweet Georgia Brown" prefigured

Wes Montgomery's and, later, Jimi Hendrix's. And so the spiral continues.

Unlike Charlie Christian, Django lived long enough to record in many different contexts with some startlingly diverse results. From his earliest days as a banjo-picking accompanist to his impromptu recording sessions with Coleman Hawkins and Benny Carter to his matching wits with dual violinists Grappelli and Eddie South on appropriated Bach pieces to his playing classic big-band swing with the Benny Carter Orchestra to his wartime use of Hubert Rostaing's clarinet, this seven-LP set covers most of the ground. Central, of course, are the priceless Quintet of the Hot Club of France recordings from the Thirties, where Django and Grappelli duel and dare each other through early jazz standards like "Limehouse Blues," "Rose Room," "Body and Soul," and "Honeysuckle Rose" like a couple of ace fighter pilots strafing in spins and loop-de-loops over their earthbound two-guitars-plus-string-bass rhythm section. There ain't nothin' else quite like it.

Which is why it's a relief that DRG has taken real care with the sound of this collected set of reissues: The balanced restoration of some previously dimmer top and bottom end lends a nicely consistent sonic sheen throughout. Aficionados—and, for better or worse, how many folks who spring for the money this box costs won't be?—will be ecstatic to find the detailed discographical and session info on the cuts included, as well as a bonus: a booklet crammed with the minutiae of Django's complete discographical output. My only quibble: The labels on one of my discs were reversed, with side one mislabeled as side two.

Let's just put it this way: This collection can usher you into the multihued, panoramic world of Django Reinhardt better than any other single source I know of. Once you're in, of course, it's a whole 'nother story. You'll absolutely have to have the two Quintet records (Django Reinhardt & Stephane Grappelli with the Quintet of the Hot Club of France and Parisian Swing) on GNP Crescendo, since none of their wonderful outrageous tracks are duplicated on this set; then there's the four-volume Everest set that among other things catches postwar Django trying out electric guitar against Rostaing's clarinet and a regular rhythm section; then there's...

—Gene Santoro

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*They're Zodiac Mindwarp and the Love Reaction. And this is the reaction they're causing across the country!*

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*Produced by David Balfe and Bill Drummond  
 Managed by Rod Smallwood for Sanctuary Music  
 by arrangement with David Balfe for D.B.M.*



Lower right: Goodbye Charlie! 17-year-old guitar-slinger Will Sexton steps out on his own.  
 Upper right: Saxman and bon vivant Branford Marsalis (pictured here without Sting) records his first masterpiece.



**Will Sexton**  
*Will and the Kill*  
 MCA

A funny thing happened on the way to the formula: the powers that be at MCA let a 17-year-old named Sexton make an album in Texas with very little interference from their end. They let Charlie Sexton's brother choose his producer (Joe Ely, not exactly on good terms with MCA after the label dumped him in '86), use his own band, and record songs mostly written by himself or in collaboration with Ely. The subject of synthesizers was never even brought up. In effect, Will has become the anti-Charlie-Texas-raunch-Sexton, and his free hand now holds a product as warmly spontaneous as Charlie's *Pictures for Pleasure* was cold and calculated. Though Will's proximity in appearance to his famous brother had much more to do with his getting signed than did his singing and guitar playing, he's made damn sure that his first LP will not be called *Magic Coattail Ride*.

The two Sexton debuts do share some rather massive acreage of common ground, however. Both aim higher than the Little Girls, but don't quite have the range to floor more than a smattering of Big Brothers. Though Will flags down the metalheads with "No Sleep," a re-wording of AC/DC's "Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap," the general tone here is more pop than crunch, more toe-tapping than head-banging. The LP's best songs, "Heart of Steel" and "Heartbeat" (an obscure Inmates cover), are power pop at its finest: driving, infectious, and ripe with the sweet aroma of teenage

sweat. Guest guitarist David Grissom, on loan from the Ely band, contributes the fattest chunks of rhythm this side of ZZ Top.

Though Will does make you forget he was born in 1970, his melodic rumble doesn't even enter the same zip code in which the adrenalin of a Slayer/Motörhead/Metallica addict resides. And kids who have trouble sleeping the night before a new Whitesnake album comes out will not find their cherished choirboys-from-hell sound on *Will and the Kill*.

To its credit, this isn't an album that fits tidily into any box except that of a 17-year-old kid doing his best songs the way Joe Ely best likes to hear them. It's a fun and loose sound more apt to bounce off mattresses nailed to the wall than to be freeze-dried in a pristine studio.

—Michael Corcoran

**Branford Marsalis**  
*Renaissance*  
 Columbia

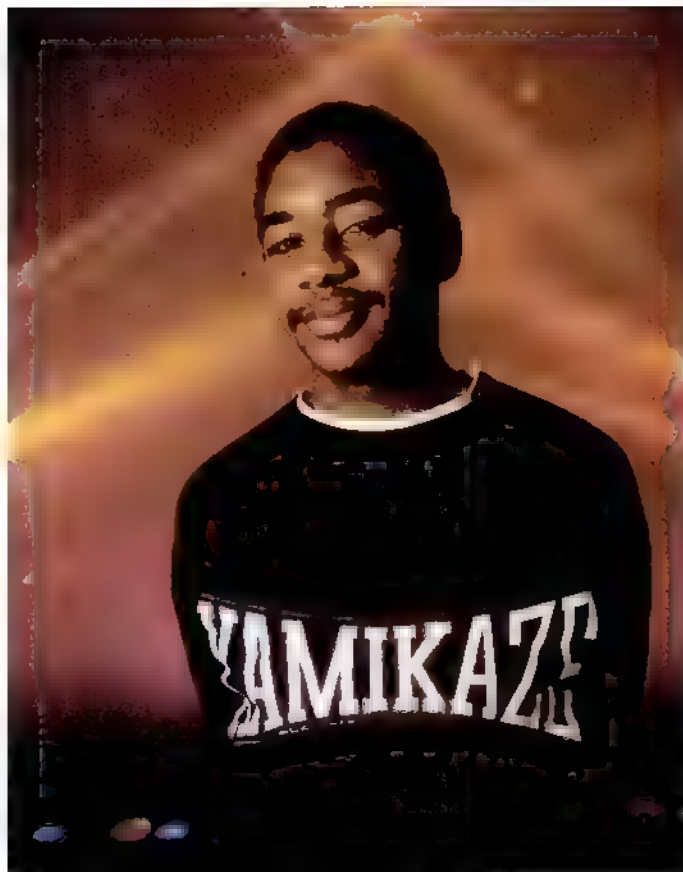
Marsalis has solved some of his tenor problems, for starters. Just compare last year's "Swinging at the Haven" with "Just One of Those Things," the opener here: While still remarkably fleet of finger and brain, he's swinging more deeply now and filling the horn better, his tone more brawnyly assertive, and there are no more of those embarrassing clinkers (although these last mattered far less than they might have—few improvisers convey the joy of flying as joyfully as Branford Marsalis, and the occasional air-

pocket doesn't really spoil the ride). Tony Williams swings the band from the drums without showboating, Kenny Kirkland plays piano about as well as usual and bassist Bob Hurst's time is solid enough so that you're not out there longing for Ron. There's more tenor on the next tune, J. J. Johnson's "Lament," and further signs of progress, among them freer phrasing and an unexpected admixture of Ben Webster breathiness, though there's still a tendency to moo on long low notes. Branford sounded superficially more together on tenor back when he was hiding his heart behind the protective obliquity of Wayne Shorter; now he lives among the greater gains and hazards of an evolving originality.

On soprano sax he is already an original, to my ears a close second only to Wayne. Not surprisingly, this album's main event is on the smaller horn, a mostly rubato treatment of Jimmy Rowles's improbably gorgeous, trilling ballad "The Peacocks" in trio with Herbie Hancock and Buster Williams. One could talk about tone, attack, breath, variable volumes of air and the technical differences between the two horns, but perhaps because one is the intuitive voice of the child and the other the man's, Branford seems to *know* so much more on soprano: just check the little pause be-

tween notes one and two of his entrance here, then the simultaneously savvy and heartfelt warmth and languor of his phrasing through the romantic rest of the head. And did someone mention *dynamics*? Stark sudden upcries in the enraptured chordal surround, then playful or affecting stalls and pauses amid the reeds, perhaps, of a near-Debussy streamscape, all of it flowing into a daringly shaped expanse of entirely original improvisation teeming with virtuoso turns and brilliant-scaled shoals of melody: Lake Branford. Gifted young improviser my foot, smart slick apprentice my hat and parsley: He knows stuff no one's willing to give him credit for on account of youth and Marsalis-envy, but let me put it down here that "The Peacocks" is probably his first recorded masterpiece, one that'll hold up in any league. It's fifteen minutes long, folks, value for money, worth the price of admission, full of secrets it hasn't offered up yet and good for months of happy listening. I expect great things of Branford Marsalis, and this is the first of them.

The rest of the album's fine: two okay Tony Williams tunes, on the first of which there's some very fine sheets-of-sound tenor; and a reprise, sorta, of "The Wrath of Tain," less wrathful than the original but in there; and an



Catherine Baulknight/Rainbow Ltd.



Paul Nolin/Photo Reserve Inc.



unaccompanied "St. Thomas" that's a nice tribute to Sonny Rollins but which, when compared with Rollins's *Solo Album*, is a handy index of the distance still to travel. A word about Delfeayo Marsalis's production: its two greatest coups are the removal of the usual undue gigantism from Tony Williams's recorded sound and the album's length: nearly an hour, achieved, unfortunately, at the expense of some sonic lustre and paid for with compression. It's one of those rare instances in which the CD might actually sound better. But Delfeayo, don't stop trying.

—Rafi Zabor



## The Young Rascals The Young Rascals

## The Young Rascals Groovin' Rhino

Remember the good old days when people still recorded music? When you heard a melody, when voices occasionally cracked and notes sometimes went flat, when you could smell the sweat? Rhino Records does, and has remastered these two Young Rascals albums. Their tinny innocence is a relief in the sterile CD era.

Probably because of these flaws, rather than in spite of them, the Young Rascals still sound great. When Eddie Brigati's voice trembles and dips on "How Can I Be Sure," you believe him. You know a guy who sings like that really would call you. Felix Cavaliere's voice is romantically suicidal in "Just A Little" and gritty on "In the Midnight Hour." The Young Rascals had a good time and it shows. Maybe that kind of dumb fun chokes you up a little. Maybe you recall a different time.

Anybody who grew up on Long Island has gotta love these guys—except for Blue Oyster Cult and Billy Joel, they're all we've got to call our Native Sons. And the last one doesn't even count.

Also, a bit of trivia: Did you know the Young Rascals were a Marxist band? According to Bob Rolontz's liner notes on *The Young Rascals*, "One



Empire Studio

of the factors that aided the Young Rascals in their speedy climb to the heights is the cooperative arrangement that exists between all members of the group. There is no leader of the Rascals; they are all equal." Each according to his ability, according to his need, right?

There are weak spots, here. "Like A Rolling Stone" is a real problem, but hey, everybody did it back then. How could the Young Rascals have known they'd be singing Future Muzak?

But why carp? "Baby Let's Wait" could be the anthem of the safe sex decade. So, pour yourself a nice cold glass of Wink, crank up the Young Rascals, and groove.

Oh, and don't forget the striped knickers and Lord Fauntleroy chemises.

—Sukey Pett

## E \* I \* E \* I \* O That Love Thang Frontier

Is it me, or does it seem like the world is overrun with geetar slingers from the Midwest? Has the expression "populist rock" replaced "post-punk" as the most overworked cliché in rockcritdom? Are there still more ex-Future Farmers of America woodshedding throughout the Heartland, readying more vinyl broadsides that are part Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street* part *Between the Buttons*? Probably, but unless mid-America's small towns close up shop tomorrow and all the bands therein migrate to either coast, the throb from the Heartland is a pop permutation that doesn't seem willing to go away. At least not anytime soon.

So here I am, after that dose of cynicism masquerading as an opening paragraph, about to say some nice things about a quartet of breadbasket bohunks (two Illini, two cheeseheads from Madison, WI) whose debut LP *Land of Opportunity*, had more snap,

crackle, and bop going for it than the phony class-consciousness of their peers. This, their sophomore outing, finds them churning out the same kind of intelligent, infectious 4/4. Although a tad too slick (Phil Bonnano, who twiddled knobs for schlock puds *Survivor*, co-produced), the O's still burn down the wheatfield, with a glint in their eyes.

As songwriters, Steve Summers and Richard Szeluga are smart and savvy without being smartasses. They also have no qualms about letting their obvious influences show through: Lennon/McCartney (tuneful pop sense), Chuck Berry (basic guitar power), the Stones (tight rhythmic thrust), a tinge of C&W, a smattering of Duane Eddy twang, and non-gooey four and five part harmonies. The LP's opener "Hey Cecelie" is pure rave-up, with a delicious chorus and some no-bull guitar scorching (Rob Harding, take a bow), and this kind of loose, unabashed, up-tempo party glee defines the rest of the disc. "Words Falling Down" and "Sea of Light" are wonderful bits of Searchers-inspired Brit whine, "Crack,

E \* I \* E \* I \* O remember the  
Buckingham: (L-R: Rick Szeluga,  
Steve Summers, Scott Gorsuch, Rob  
Harding).



Crack, Crack" and "Ya Ya Love" kick up some convincing aggression (kind of, these guys are completely non-threatening), and they've even come up with what could be a certified college radio hit in the stop'n'go, "La Bamba"-fueled "Andy Warhol's Dead but I'm Not." Actually the only stinkeroo in the closer, "Brother Michael," a lurching ballad, awash in sub-"Strawberry Fields" strings and lachrymose vocal.

There's no way that E\*!\*E\*!\*O, regardless of how many good records they put out, is gonna make me less cynical about this sub-genre. But that's OK. By turning down the pretentious introspection, cranking up the fun, and infusing their records with sheer exuberance, they're ■ cut above the competition. And if that's not the intellectually satisfying conclusion you were looking for, too bad. It's the truth.

—John Dougan

### James Taylor Never Die Young Columbia

Some people, like James ("Blue") Taylor, are old when they're young. So, for them, the aging process isn't a shock or a disappointment. It's a satisfying experience that destroys the insecurities of youth. On "Fire and Rain," Taylor wistfully alluded to a metaphysical cul-de-sac that awaited those who could survive the torture of youth. Now, two decades later, with his appropriately titled album, *Never Die Young*, he seems to have arrived at that survivor's world. "I'm gonna

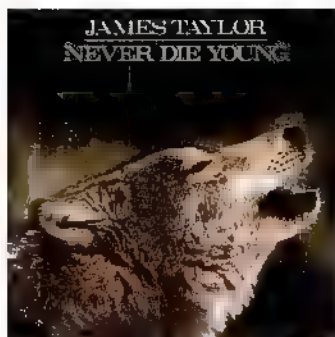
and taken a laissez-faire approach to inner turmoil. "You got this far to the lucky star," he acknowledges, "but tomorrow is another day."

Adding to the relaxed circumspection of the album is Don ("Dreams") Grolnick's wide-open production. Grolnick has spritzed the project with ■ jazz-like vibe that creeps up behind Taylor's country-road sound. "First of May," is a particularly light haiku-ish tone-poem that is beautifully shaded by Grolnick's background keyboard work. Ditto for the background keyboard and chorus on the title tune.

No doubt this album is calculated to ship directly to VH-1 and the network of adult contemporary and new-age music stations slowly infiltrating the nation. But in Taylor's case, the adult contemporary tag fits well. After all, the real purpose behind VH-1 is to cater to a self-obsessed rock 'n' roll generation that is ill at ease with the most deadly conspiracy of all time—human aging. In order to survive this process, it is imperative that guidance is presented by voices that have steered us through the turmoil of youth.

Having lost his teeth and his hair, Taylor wipes away the self-doubts of his peers, and sells aging as B-movie refinement ("a silk suit and a crocodile smile"), a description somehow also fitting for the upbeat cynicism postured by VH-1's most complicated Veejay, Bobby Rivers. It is this free-for-all, no regrets mellow approach to *Never Die Young* that enables ■ mid-range poet like "Sweet Baby" James Taylor (somewhere between Rod McKuen and Lou Reed) to produce an album that is personally satisfying and even more important, demographically compatible.

—The New Rich Stim

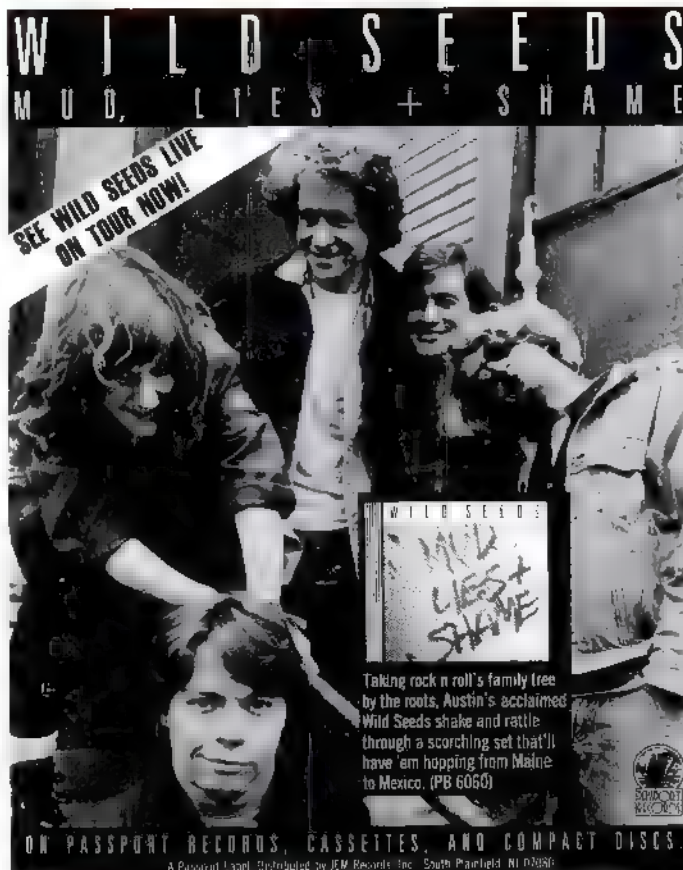
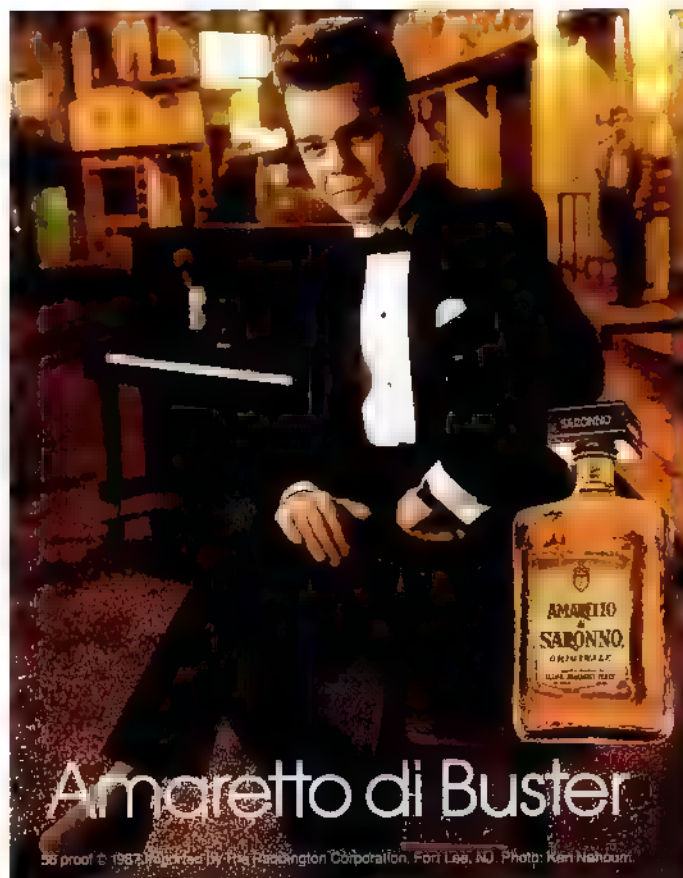


give up believing I was born to run," he sings, "and stop acting like a man that gets shot from ■ gun."

Some of Taylor's appeal has to do with his ability to combine a mellow sound with a love-and-angst aura. The result is a tension that gives ■ sadness to his happy performances ("How Sweet It Is") and a pleasant edge to his sad tunes ("Don't Let Me Be Lonely Tonight"). But on *Never Die Young*, Taylor has dumped some of the angst

### Keith Jarrett Book of Ways Clavichord ECM

By the time I got to hear this, several people had already told me that it had become their favorite Keith Jarrett album, and it's easy to see why. The clavichord's sonic resemblance to strings plucked by a human hand roots the music in ■ more specific physicality than either its more aristocratic coeval the harpsichord or their more technologically advanced descendant the piano, and this has yielded Jarrett a number of gains. On the one hand it has checked his tendency towards the grandiose, but more importantly has suggested ■ number of source musics—lute and oud literatures, Bach and pre-Bach, renaissance and medieval modes, and even flamenco—from which he has been able to draw not only technical materials but emotive and spiritual substance. Above all



there is what the album's subtitle *The Feeling of Strings* suggests: intimacy and presence. Jarrett has been able to perform with all his accustomed inwardness and yet with paradoxically greater objectivity and force; the music, however sensitively and beautifully played, comes right at you, insists that you listen to it, demands an equivalence with your own physical existence, looks you right in the eye, is brother to your flesh. Anyhow that's one way to put it.

The album is hardly a museum piece, for all its awareness of source.

Jarrett has reshaped his materials freely if less than rhapsodically—since this is not a rhapsodic album—at the dictates of inspiration and to suit highly personal ends. There are some purely contemporary pieces, awake to the possibilities of discontinuity and repetition. The music makes me feel that I have understood Jarrett too quickly, limited him to two or three of my own insufficiently revised first impressions, reduced him in essence to the falsely familiar. But here, virtually throughout, is the fabled sound of surprise: I'm compelled to acknowledge

all the ways in which he has grown. Either this album is a departure for him, or he's tweaked my ears awake. Or both.

*Book of Ways* is, of course, precisely and beautifully recorded, and my only real complaint is that Jarrett has failed to credit his instrument's maker. I assume his clavichord is newly made, and it's a beaut. Jarrett draws an extraordinary range of sounds from its strings and good wood, bent notes an oud player might envy in his desert, roundelays capturing the attack of hammer dulcimer, guitarisms, an oc-

casional courtly echo of another age finely focussed in terms belonging to our own. The album might appeal most immediately to those used to preclassical music and Middle Eastern sounds, though I suspect there are plenty of vitamins for everyone. His best album? Along with *Standards Live*, *The Sun Bear Concerts* and a couple of others that keep changing names and places, it could well be just that.

—Rafi Zabor

## SPIN-OFFS

**MIRACLE LEGION** *Surprise Surprise Rough Trade* At first listen, Miracle Legion, with its soft-spoken Sixties-ish sound, are reminiscent of REM. One big difference between the two bands is that lyricist/singer Mark Mulcahy's voice is clear, melodic, and comprehensible. At times, Mulcahy sounds like Nils Lofgren (circa "Keith Don't Go"), at others like a less nasal Willie Nelson. Miracle Legion create nice little stories, with obligatory touches of the obscure, that conjure up small town longing, love, and coming of age. Even in their more strident moments, Miracle Legion remain gentle and, dare one say, wistful.

—Amy Linden

**THE MEKONS** *New York ROIR cassette* A chicken dances a Buddy Rich paradiddle on the skins of freshly slaughtered lizards, wire brushes glued to its feet. An answering machine completes its absurdist ritual to the tune of "Long Haired Lover from Liverpool." A whole band bares its soul to a Sony Walkman on a protracted stopover at JFK Airport. The Mekons' longtime association with celebrated Belgian analyst Dr. Stella Artois has helped them realize that the paradox of excess is that they can never remember joy or pain. Last spring the band hacked their way through the soft white underbelly of the American heartland. They were drunk, they ached, they were beautiful. Now you can buy your way into their lives with this unique soundtrack to a lifestyle of unending parody.

—Steve Goulding/*The Mekons*

**ARVO PÄRT** *Arbus ECM* Pärt, an Estonian composer now living and working in Berlin, is a postmodern medievalist, drawing on both Gesualdo and film composer Max Steiner. Though not really a minimalist, Pärt looks for (and frequently finds) the simple heart of mysteries.

—Brian Cullman



Monica Dine

**DAVID SYLVIAN** *The Secret of the Beehive (Virgin)* If Nick Drake had taken est. If Gordon Lightfoot wore makeup.

—Brian Cullman

**DENNIS BROWN** *Inseparable J&W Records* Willie Lindo, producer, arranger, and frequently writer of last year's best lover's rock (Beres Hammond, Maxi Priest), doesn't fare quite as well with Dennis Brown. The record is way slick, the arrangements overblown, and although Brown's voice is still gorgeous, he seems to have been listening to more Billy Paul than is good for a young dread.

—Brian Cullman

**BILL LASWELL** *Hear No Evil Venture* Laswell imagines a spacious and mysterious Old West, a painted desert in which Gabby Hayes and Alla Rakha can comfortably share an espresso around the campfire. *Hear No Evil* continues some of the fine work Laswell began with Ginger Baker on *Horses & Trees* and extends it, making this his most lyrical and evocative album.

—Brian Cullman

**IRMA THOMAS** *The Way I Feel Rounder* The Queen is in fine voice throughout, and the material, mostly from the back pages of the Lorraine

*The Mekons (L-R: Steve Goulding, Susie Honeyman, Tom Greenhalgh, John Langford, Kenny Lite, and kneeling, Rico Bellissimo) contemplate America and review their new ROIR cassette.*

Ellison and Aretha Franklin songbooks, is carefully (if somewhat conservatively) chosen. But producer Scott Billington has somehow found the most leaden rhythm sections in New Orleans. If Toussaint's not available, somebody please get Ms. Thomas over to Willie Mitchell.

—Brian Cullman

**SONIC YOUTH** *Sister SST* Like the gold coins Caligula used to dump from his rooftop onto the crowded streets, Sonic Youth's latest record—despite its cold blue mask—will burn your fingers. Sure, it's no substitute for the live thing, but you already knew that, and have learned to cope with it. *Sister* has other virtues. Stripped of its coat-of-many-overtones, SY's intricately structured noise gleams like polished bones: Turns out this band can write songs. Their sense of dynamics continues to develop, and the "weird tunings" now seem to add to, more than they distract from, the music—not just because some of the novelty's worn off, but because the tunings are now built around the songs.

The two best songs here ("Catholic Block" and "Tuff Gnarl") show why some long-time fans are screaming bloody sell-out over this record (usually a good sign in a band's musical development). Both songs splice melody and mayhem together as if the combination were as natural as meat and cookies, and the result works almost as well. There's no band who uses noise as a musical weapon quite so well, and no other rock group whose textures are as deep, as colorful, or as affecting.

Buy this record. Play it over and over. In ten years everyone will be trying to sound like this.

—James Greer



**Ofra Haza**  
Yemenite Songs  
Shanachie

Last fall, the Yemenite Israeli singer Ofra Haza made a flash visit to London to settle her part in the "Paid in Full" success story. The London-based Cold Cut mixing crew's refurbishment of Eric B. and Rakim's rap had floated to the top of the UK charts, and people were wondering about the female character whose high, wailing voice had been introduced into the storyline. Those, like the Cold-Cutters, who have both ears tuned to the beats of the world, already owned the Tel Aviv twelve-inch "Im Nin'Alu" by Ofra Haza, both in the 'Special Mix,' Israeli style, and the shorter, original-album version.

Ofra's reaction to being pirated was polite and angry. "They could have asked me," she complained. "They took my special way of songs; this is my style." She also knew the publicity would help her own single—hastily

re-remixed in Tel Aviv and issued in limited numbers to London deejays—and her album of traditional Yemenite songs which started the whole story.

Until 1985, when she decided on this collection of traditional material, Ofra's reputation was based on a repertoire of AOR ballads and poppish songs. Then, suddenly, an ethnic turn-about: "It's as if Sheena Easton made an album of Scottish folk songs," her London manager Roger Armstrong said. Ofra's own reasons are very personal. "I did this LP as a present to my parents and all the old people who brought a beautiful culture to Israel from Yemen. I took traditional songs from the Diwan book of (religious) poetry, which every Yemenite family has; and two others, "Galbi" and "A'Salk" were written by a very old man thirty years ago. I put them together using traditional Yemenite percussion called tin (ts'an) and violin, putting new dress on the songs, and also giving them the respect and honor I feel for them."

The result is inspirational and uplift-

ing. There are devotional praise songs, parables, laments of love and homesickness that resonate with images of doe-eyed princesses perfumed with cinnamon and pomegranate. Ofra's clear and distinctive voice soars and wavers around each compulsively catchy melody.

The record starts with a high, unaccompanied theme, which does not prepare you for the funky, clattering ensemble which bounces along behind it at the pace of a cantering camel. Her mournful Mid-Eastern minors set the tone for the album, but the instrumentation anchors the mood squarely away from melancholia. Most fascinating is the inclusion of the tin percussion—literally copper trays and big, empty olive tins, slapped and struck, building the funk and rattling alongside timbales (which they perfectly partner) and congas, and countering any excessive sweetness encouraged by the strings or wind section. Pairings like the start of "Lefalach Harimon," where tin and congas are relieved by a bowed double bass and

perky oboe tune, stand on their own as rich instrumentals, and Ofra's voice is the icing on the cake.

The effect is ultramodern, and it's hardly surprising that the hip hoppers couldn't keep their edit-shears away from the single: the strident tones of timbales and tin make perfect city beats. A Latin hip-hop edit isn't too much of a future fantasy: This music, with its Moorish ancestry, keeps the clave only just below the surface.

Back in Tel Aviv, the album has sold beyond the Yemenite community. Ofra's voice and face are constant presences on radio and TV, even though the repertoire is very different. This album is the turning point: Will she follow the call of her folk roots, be lured by the Yo'boys, or stick with the adult cabaret circuit? Whatever, this album remains a must for anyone with an ear to the earth's crust: East meets West, ancient meets modern; it's poetry set in motion by a resonating olive can and a cheap tin tray!

—Sue Steward

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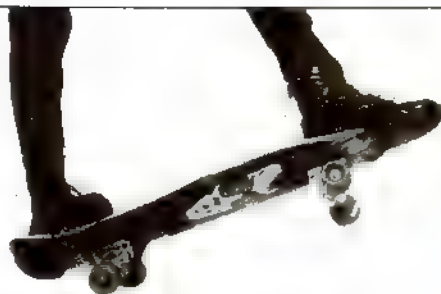
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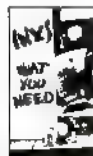
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# SINGLES

Column by John Leland

The first time I went to a live hip hop show I was disappointed. There it all was, two turntables, a bunch of rap crews with great clothes and great dance steps, and a house full of people ready to have fun. This was the era of the deejay; from a lime to a lemon, a lemon to a lime, a procession of them cut the beat in half the time, volleying it back and forth between turntables, extending and repeating scraps of records, maintaining a percussive dialogue. One crew after another, the rappers brought the crowd up, way up, getting us to throw our hands in the air and wave 'em like we just didn't care, and scream all kinds of things. The deejays cut some bongo

beats on top of the bass and snare, the rappers broke into unison and out again, the crowd yelled "Ho" or "I am—somebody" with gusto. Everybody exchanged zodiac signs. It didn't take but seconds before the whole room was moving. The people started to shrink and the beat started to grow, as the bits and pieces of kinetic music and dance aligned themselves into what promised to be a long and rewarding current. It was incredible, and looked like it'd stay that way.

But then the crews would break it all down: take away the beat and talk out of meter, baiting the audience about what it had just lost or what it might get next. The rush of what they'd built up gave way to the tease of anticipation. And then they'd boot it back up again, full tilt, until the next

*Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, back by popular demand.*

break. It was frustrating, like watching Ed McMahon come out and yell, "And now . . . here's Johnny" every time Carson's monologue started to cook. The whole night proceeded in these bursts of excitement followed by lulls. I didn't get it. The music didn't build and climax like classic white rock 'n' roll, nor sustain the endless plateaus of funk and disco. It was a rhythm without rhythm, as if the basic unit of the music was the fragment.

This, I eventually realized, was the idea. Like all music, hip hop poses a specific relationship between sound and time. Where disco and funk suspend time through repetition, and straight rock channels it into a narrative line, hip hop both chops it up and freezes it. The forces are contradictory: On the one hand, deejays extend small pieces of music over long periods of time; on the other, they bump these fragments against other fragments so that the two pieces of information exist simultaneously, removing time from the equation. Time is both jumping around and standing

still. The same applies on a larger scale: Bits of old James Brown records butt up against computer beats and slang very obviously rooted in the present.

Though the process is mechanical, the idea is very electronic. Each scrap of data is discrete, independent. It's up to the listener to put the pieces together (or maybe to keep them apart; hip hop dance has always been as fractured as the music). It is difficult to listen to the music passively. Hip hop forces you to be active. Even a very simple record like the Jungle Brothers' "Jimbrowski," which is the rare—maybe even unique—rap that really is about penis size, jumps from singing to talking to rapping to snatches of Jimmy Walker, without linear logic. In the hands of a hip hop deejay—and the records are best after a second pair of hands pulls them apart and puts them together again—"Jimbrowski" becomes a dense and unpredictable collage of beats and words.

In New York at least, radio is starting to play more rap music. Poppish records like Heavy D. & the Boyz's "Overweight Lovers in the House," but also hard ones like Public Enemy's "Bring the Noise" and the Audio Two's "Top Billin'" have made their way into regular rotation. While this is a good thing, it seems to benefit the radio more than it does the records. Next to LeVert or Gladys Knight, a hip hop record sounds jarring, like it doesn't quite fit. And ideologically, it doesn't. LeVert and Knight have their own relationship with time; hip hop upsets the rhythm. Hip hop wants "Love Overboard" or "Casanova" to be little bytes of information that it can scramble; that those bytes are three or four minutes long rather than two or three seconds is something it can't deal with. Rap records jump out of urban contemporary radio programming like a wake-up call: jarring and requiring immediate attention, not always what's called for.

So much the better for urban contemporary radio programming.

## BETTER STILL:

**Jody Watley**, "Some Kind of Lover" (MCA)

**J.V.C.F.O.R.C.E.**, "Strong Island" (B-Bob)

**Morris Day**, "Fishnet" (Warner)

**Pato Banton & Ranking Roger**, "Pato & Roger Come Again" (Primitive Man/I.R.S.)

**Pebbles**, "Girlfriend" (MCA)

**Terence Trent D'Arby**, "Wishing Well" (Columbia)

**Kechia Jenkins**, "I Need Somebody" (Profile)

**Rob Base & D.J. E-Z Rock**, "It Takes Two" (Profile)

**Kid'n Play**, "Do This My Way" (Select)

# UNDERGROUND

Joseph Spence,  
Underground  
Technology,  
Baboon Dooley

Column by  
Byron Coley



A few days ago some turban-swaddled co-ed mooed up to my table at Boston's Cafe Bub. She informed me that there's a folk music revival on and that I'd better get hip to it. I dunked my bagel in my espresso and made like it was news to me. "What, like **Joseph Spence**?" I asked.

"Joseph Spence? Is he from New York? I meant like the Washington Squares. They're friends of Suzanne Vega. Did Joseph Spence used to be in the Lounge Lizards?"

I swallowed my bile and dug the nails of my right hand into my palm, meditating on the pain until the fat-assed fan of born-again Joni-Mitchellism got embarrassed and mosied out of sight. *It's bad enough that Sean Penn wrote liner notes to the Phil Ochs demo album that Rhino put out last year, I mused. Does the legacy of people like John Fahey, Michael Hurley, Spider John Koerner, Sandy Bull, and Joseph Spence have to be sullied by washed-up new wave cretins wearing berets and performing Peter, Paul & Mounds medleys?* I should hope not. Listening to the Washington Squares and thinking it's folk music is akin to believing that Stevie Ray Vaughan is an authentic blues titan.

Real folk music—the good stuff anyhow—is as bursting with force as Killdozer. Ideas, power, purity, and noise come together in a blinding singularity that can slay you in a million ways. There are a lotta performers for whom I'd gladly make a case, but perhaps the furthest-out folk monster that you (the nonbeliever) oughta hear is the late Bahaman genius, Joseph Spence.

Spence, a stonemason by trade, was first recorded in the Bahamas in 1958 by the legendary field producer Samuel Charters. Spence was the uncontested king of local guitarists at the time, and Folkways released the recording from the outdoor session on two albums, *Music of the Bahamas Vol. 1* and *Folk Guitar*. Picking out two or three seemingly alternate melodies at the same time, Spence barreled through pop standards and discordant hymnprovs with total pants-down abandon. Grunting, bursting into guttural gouts



of song, and generally having a tough time containing his ecstasy, Spence sounds like a man possessed. Actually he sounds like several men possessed, but the sparkling cascades of notes that jet out of his guitar are the work of only two hands.

No sooner had the first of these albums been released than Spence's name became hallowed in advanced folkie circles. In 1964, Fritz Richmond of the Jim Kweskin Jug Band went off to find him. He caught up with Spence in Nassau, and returned with *Happy All the Time* (Elektra, reissued by Carthage, PO Box 667, Rocky Hill, NJ 08553). This time, the equipment used to record seems to have been a bit more sophisticated than Charters's rig, since the playing on *Happy* has a crisp, bright sound that captures the complexity of Spence's sense of rhythm and melody. Slithering off onto distant tangents, wandering into what seem to be impenetrably dense brambles of notes, Spence's fingers illuminate the way with such

brilliance that they invariably lead him back to the path he started on. Spence also gets involved more in singing on this disc (his prior vocalese was more like a wild extension of Bud Powell's emotive growling) and the results are as postglottal as anything described in Richard Meltzer's book, *The Aesthetics of Rock*. It's a good place to begin your Spencian odyssey.

Spence next recorded in 1965, again on a Bahaman field trip, for a pair of compilations, *The Real Bahamas Vol. 1 & 2* (Nonesuch). He gets one solo track on each record and makes several other appearances either duetting with his wife Louise or accompanying his sister, Jenny Pindar. Even buried under a relative-hillock of voices singing praises to the Lord, Spence's guitar and voice glitter like pumice boulders flaring in a Bessemer furnace.

In 1971, Spence came to Cambridge, Massachusetts, at the behest of the Boston Blues Society. He performed at Harvard and did a



recording session in an apartment; tapes of the two came out as *Good Morning Mr. Walker* (Arhoolie, Box 9195, Berkeley, CA 94709). As it's stayed in print since its release, this is the disc by which most people know Spence, and it's a doozy. His singing (credited as "vocal sounds" on the sleeve) is more in focus than before, and if it isn't the sound of a good apocalypse then there's no such thing. He's so far into his own tongue-trench that you can invent all kinds of personal lyric variations to suit your own mood. Additionally, there's a version of "Sloop John B" that'd give Brian Wilson hives and a take of "I Bid You Goodnight" that slices both the Pindars and the Dead. A thing of great beauty. I just wish there'd been a second volume.

The final record released before Spence's death in 1984 was *Living on the Hallelujah Side* (Rounder, 1 Camp St., Cambridge, MA 02144). About half was recorded in concert during Spence's second trip to Boston in '72, and the remainder was done in a Nassau hotel room in '78. On the later tracks his playing is a bit less forceful than on the live stuff, but I'm partial to the live part of this record since it features my all-time favorite Spence track—an awesome rendition of "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town." Spence delicately plucks out the melody while making sounds like a huge steer-grinder. The combination of gorgeously-wrought, intimately-known melody and other-worldly filigree is the most compact example of Spencian dynamism imaginable. That it can scare the shit outta tots is just gravy. If you really wanna folk-out (and not just be a dilettante woosy), you better have these in your collection.

New Zealand record of the issue is **Little Stevie McCabe's** album *Sweat It Out* (Sleek Bott, Box 2764, Christchurch, New Zealand). One or two of you might remember Stevie as a singer/guitarist on the Axemen's anarchic *Three Virgins* set from Flying Nun, and this solo effort is as stripped-down-chaotic as that group-play was explosively shambolic. Stevie rakes up a string-riot that falls somewhere between Pep Lester and Jandek in the instrumental department, while blathering and cooing vocals that make Eugene Chadbourne sound like early Mike Douglas. There are twenty-six tracks here and almost every one would make you bark gravy if you heard it on some radio show.

**Union Carbide Productions'** debut LP, *In the Air Tonight* (Radium, Sodra Allegatan 3, S-41301 Göteborg, Sweden), is the most impressive first wax I've heard from Scandinavia since Cortex's "Jesus I Belong" 45. But purely original it ain't. If you've ever heard the Sonic Rendezvous

Band's "City Slang" it'll take you a while to get used to these guys calling the riff to "Cartoon Animal" their own, and there are a host of other lifted Motor Cityism's sprinkled around this record's flaming perimeter. But shit, this is the orneriest buttfull of ug-gush since the Cosmic Psychos' mini-LP. And these guys even add a coupla haronkin' Steve Mackay-style saxes to the mix. So you know they're not turtles. But you will be if you don't buy this.

Britain's **Recommended Records** (387 Wandsworth Rd., London SW8, UK) has been one of the world's most consistently interesting "progressive" labels ever since they undertook their Faust reissue series at the dawn of the decade. In the meantime they've been involved in any number of esoteric projects, including the *Recommended Records Quarterly*, which tucks a magazine into the silkscreened sleeve of a compilation LP. The most recent issue I've seen (Vol. 2, No. 2) is typically great. The

LP features such things as Robert Wyatt's gorgeous vocal interpretation of Charlie Haden's "Chairman Mao," a practice solo by drummer John French, and a piece made of overlaid Gregorian chants. The magazine contains a swell history of AMM, a set of Peter Blegvad's lyrical puzzles, an article advocating the old VCS3 synthesizer, and so on.

It's tough to appreciate the wildness



of a lotta rock 'n' roll that was cut in the Fifties when you've lived through two subsequent generations of punk rock. As with every rule, however, there are exceptions, and one of the biggest ones in this case is **Bo Diddley**. Almost everything he recorded prior to that keyboardy *Surfin'* with Bo LP snuts and cranks with the best of 'em. His approach is probably a whole lot more varied than you think, too. And since you're gonna have a devil of a time turning up those Checker albums and early 45s, I'd like to point you towards a handsome new collection of his stuff called *Give Me a Break* (Checkmate, import). Tons of damn fine obscurities packed up and ready to go. Combine it with the records that Chess/MCA has already reissued here and you'll be ronkin' around the kitchen for weeks to come.

**Crystallized Movements'** long-gone first album was called *Mind Disaster* and it was one of the most damaged pieces of guitar-psych excess this side



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## UNDERGROUND

of Randy Holden's *Population II*. In the time since *Mind D.*, the Crystallized Movements have ceased being a "mere" jam-vehicle and have evolved into a functional band capable of playing songs that you don't have to be zonked to "get." The tunes on their new record, *Dog... Tree... Satellite Seers* (Twisted Village), have a shape that could probably be coaxed into the ears of college students without undue incident. Choice American meat.

You probably missed out on the early seven inchers by Youngstown, OH's **Sister Ray**, but if you act now you can still catch their debut LP, *Random Violence* (Resonance, PO Box 213, 1740 AE Schager, Netherlands). It contains sixteen cubes of hairy-eyeball-style-guitar-wipe and sounds about like you hoped the Dead Boys would when you'd only heard about them. The band has gobbled elements like Six-Oh garage-trash and White Panthroid metal-pop, combined it with pan-punk beat-drive and shot it out their collective nostril like a huge snot tumor. From the opening chord of "Release" (which bears an uncanny resemblance to the opening chord of the Controllers' "Killer Queens") through the testifying-outro of "She Wants to Have Bob's Baby" (reprise from their first EP), *Random Violence* will swab your inner ear like a big, harsh Q-Tip.

On their last record, San Francisco's **Tragic Mulatto** belched out heavily-hornish noise that sounded like the creation of some old North Beach derelicts supercharged by a new, powerful distillate of Serno. Three or four years later, the band has changed direction almost completely with their new album, *Locos por el Sexo* (Alternative Tentacles, PO Box 11458, San Francisco, CA 94101). On this beaut they come off like a throbbing punkoid cross between Frightwig, real early Jefferson Airplane, and a fertile war pig from Planet 9. The mood is shaped largely by the throat-motion of the band's amazing new chanteuse, Flatula Lee Roth, which pigeons together with the wildly radical anti-penis slant of the lyrics in such a way as to create a loud, sloppy masterpiece of amisogyny. Yawlping, grotty, horn-laced dunt that features the soon-to-be-classic line, "Don't let him cum in your poop."

That's it. If you wanna try to weasel your way into here, drop me a record or something at PO Box 301, W. Somerville, MA 02144.



## UNDERGROUND TECHNOLOGY An Eight-Track Way of Life

The whole early-Seventies-revo-schtick going round these days is about as interesting as poking sand with a warm fork. Any argument about the comparative merits of such retards—um, revisionists—as Guns N' Roses, Faster Pussycat, and Das Damen has no basis in reality. Never will. There are plenty of reasons for this, but one of the most compelling is that none of this music is available on 8-track tape cartridge. No object houses the authentic anima of the early Seventies as naturally as the 8-track does.

Since some of you youngsters may be unfamiliar with this apex of techno-idiocy, it's probably best that we describe the beast. An 8-track cartridge is about as big as four cassettes welded together. It's got an open end that you push into the player's welcoming maw and once you tamp that sucker firmly into the slot you can sit back, eat a few Parest 400's, and nod out knowing that you're well taken

care of. The tape reverses itself at the end of each play and the tape heads adjust to read the next batch of music in the opposite direction. Which means that you can have an endless



stream of personally-chosen-sounds without moving a goddamn muscle.

And don't start blathering to me about CD's. The continuous-play, lo-fi essence of the 8-track experience is

vastly different from the continuous-play option that CD's offer. Bands as endlessly dull as Deep Purple, mid-period Spirit, and Humble Pie (to name but three giants of the era) had to exist as unavoidable background-chug before they could be reckoned with as titans. And it was tough to spend a night driving around North Jersey in 1972 without hearing either Machine Head, The 12 Dreams of Dr. Sardonicus, or Rockin' the Fillmore several times in a row. Utterly mediocre crap became so familiar, such an indivisible part of driving around at night smashing stuff, that it rose to the level of BIG FAVE merely via its recreational associations. Sadly, no Aerosmith wannabe has the same opportunity today.

"Certain bands just seem to have been better suited to the format," says Bob Hinkle. In 1970 and '71, Hinkle was one of the people at Ampex Tapes who decided which titles would be released on 8-track, so he oughta know. "The popularity of certain bands, like Creedence, who could appeal to both high school kids and the older guy in his pick-up

truck, was understandable. But there were also those bands like Spirit that just seemed to sell and sell and sell." Mysterious? Not really.

8-track players were such shitty, rickety contraptions that most people who really dug 'em (like me and my pals) had as much taste as goats. Sure, stuff like *Faust IV* and *The Heliocentric Worlds of Sun Ra* was available on 8-track, but who cared, when you could get *Canned Heat Live at the Topanga Corral*? It wasn't like you were at home, listening on headphones or anything. The music of dumbness made perfect sense when you were ripped to the gills and looking for garbage cans to squash.

If they were available on 8-track, I could probably make some sense of the newest Green River, Soul Asylum, and Die Kreuzen releases. But the most recent cartridge I can find was made in '78 and none of the labels we surveyed is planning to reintroduce the format. So to all you bands rewriting the 'tard-rock manifesto out there—Good Luck. You're gonna need it.

—Nelson Woomer

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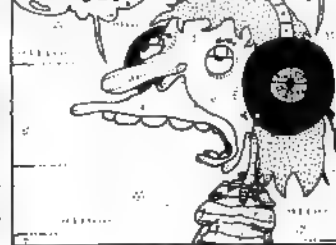
Baboon is angry. I don't have to take this crap! I'm going to see the New Left Peoples' Media Freedom Front!



bump-a-bump-a bump bump bump



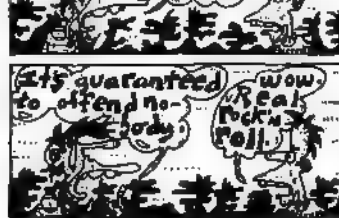
Dooley, this crap is sexist Supercilious ethno-centric trash!



I have no choice but to label you a pig and demand you get your sorry ass out of this office now!



That night at the club... Um, like what's with it? I've changed the it a little. Now it's a disk concept album. 4 little dude's lamb's fight against sex ed teacher.



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# EVERY DAY'S A MEGADETH DAY

Call it speed-metal, thrash, metal-punk crossover, but don't let the categories confuse you: This is a rock 'n' roll band, and it's going to be a great one.

Article by Robert Palmer Photography by Scott Wippermann

In the fast-paced video of Megadeth's bruising, sharply ironic song "Peace Sells," the music momentarily comes crashing to a halt and we see a kid watching the band on TV. He's completely immersed in the performance until his dad starts grumbling, "I want to watch the news." The kid looks up and tells his dad, in all innocence, "This is the news!"

It's a chilly night in Cleveland, and although Dio is headlining, a substantial proportion of the crowd is shouting for Megadeth, who are second on the bill. The metal kids' preferences are evident not only from the brisk business at the table selling Megadeth T-shirts, but from the two strapping jock-type guys parading around the hall with their dates riding astride their shoulders, carrying a streaming, homemade banner that reads "Megadeth/Dio/Savatage," with Megadeth's name emphatically topping the list.

Megadeth have a lot to celebrate tonight. Their new album, *So Far, So Good...So What!* has just cracked the top thirty, despite getting virtually no commercial radio play. Later in the eve-

ning, MTV's metal-ghetto "Headbangers Ball" show is premiering the video of Megadeth's strongest single yet, a cavalry-charge remake of the Sex Pistols' "Anarchy in the U.K.," celebrating the tenth anniversary of punk. By the time the video airs, the band's bus will be on the highway, bound for Pittsburgh, where they're celebrating a night off from the grueling Dio tour by headlining their own show at a suburban theater.

"Wait'll you see our crowd," says Dave Ellefson, Megadeth bassist and co-founder. "The skinheads, the hardcore and punk people come to our shows, even though most of the crowds are the metal freaks, longhairs. What's surprising is that we do 'Anarchy in the U.K.' as an encore every night and everybody out there knows the lyrics to the fucking thing. I was a teenager when that record came out, and I remember it caught on real gradually. It was more of a controversy thing with that band; that song wasn't really a hit, it was more of a fucking statement. And now, ten years later, it's weird to see how really popular the song is, and that everybody knows it."

It's a new hour, this new hour. The punk/metal and skinhead/longhair antipathies of the Seventies and early Eighties are history for Megadeth's generation of kids. They relate to music that combines the social conscience, venomous anger, and slam-tempo overdrive of punk with the fretboard virtuosity and punishing bludgeon-riffs of metal.

Megadeth seems poised to become the new hour's band of choice. The way they're feeling tonight, they can deal with the sleazy motels, the lingering fallout from having sacked and replaced half the band between the last album and this one, the endless bus travel on ice-slick winter highways, tight money, safe sex, unsafe sex—they can handle it. And they're definitely up for taking on the self-appointed moral crusaders in the rock censorship movement; they did it on their new album, they do it every night. Mustaine, who prefers to let his lyrics, his guitar, and his body language do the talking, takes time out after the second or third

*Megadeth chill: (L-R) Dave Ellefson, Jeff Young, Chuck Behler, Dave Mustaine.*



song of the night to deliver the new hour news.

"Does anybody here like the PMRC?" the lanky, strawberry-blond asks the Cleveland audience. The barrage of four-letter words and rude gestures that follows suggests that nobody does. "Well, this next song is about the PMRC, and it's directed towards one asshole in particular who's fucking around with our constitutional rights and trying to take away our freedom of speech! So EAT THIS, TIPPER! This is 'Hook in Mouth'." And as Megadeth's precision riff machine thunders into action, Mustaine half-sings, half-snarls:

*F, is for fighting, R, is for red,  
Ancestors' blood in battles they've shed  
E, we elect them, E, we eject them,  
In the land of the free, and the home of the brave.  
D, is for your dying, O, your overture.  
M, they will cover your grave with manure.  
This spells out freedom, it means nothing to me,  
As long as there's a PMRC.*

© 1987 by Mustaine Music/  
Theory Music/Elf Music (BMI)

With new recruits Chuck Behler on cannonade drums and Jeff Young on superflash guitar, plus founders Mustaine and Ellefson, the new Megadeth packs a lot of news, feeling, and pressure-compacted riffing into the forty-minute set the Dio tour allows them. The blinding speed of the screaming sonic-guitar breaks is pure metal; so is the fact that they're entirely composed, as much a part of the song as lyrics or melody, and played the same, with more or less intensity and charge depending on the quality of performer-audience interface, on any given night. Still, there are no solos as such—even the guitar breaks are pared down to essentials—and the careening momentum of the music is pure punk.

After the show, the young women—girls, most of them, from the point of view of chronology if not of experience—line up to have albums, jackets, and mammaries autographed and/or fondled. While the big tour bus revs its motors, the road manager and crew check their watches and shake their heads. Some band members have claimed their

*Dave Mustaine: "You can play all kinds of licks, but unless people can relate to what you're doing, who cares?"*

right to privacy. Others are considering the night's options in light of the drive to Pittsburgh that lies ahead. Finally, remaining visitors are told they'll either have to leave or pay for plane tickets back home the next morning. One by one they exit, some ceremoniously, some not. One, a model, remains, snuggled in Mustaine's arms. Though the band calls Mustaine the General, the General keeps a skeptical, seen-it-all straw-boss on the payroll to crack the whip. "I'm paying for her ticket," Mustaine explains to him. "This is Mrs. General." His instant spouse looks up and adds, with charming candor, "What he means is, I'm Mrs. General tonight."

But once the tour bus is finally underway, Mustaine, who has been called moody, arrogant, and a perpetual smart-ass more than a few times, opts for conversational stimulation while Mrs. General naps on his shoulder. "I want to really get it straight about me and Metallica, and 'In My Darkest Hour,' and all the rest of it," he says. "Look, I was a founder of that band, songwriter, guitarist. For a while, I was real angry, real bitter. That's when I came up with the name 'Megadeth' for this band. I wanted to have the most ultra-ferocious band in the world, and a name to go with it."

It takes almost no time at all for Mustaine to knock down a beer and jump back on his accelerating train of thought. "People tried to get Cliff and me to dis each other, get a feud going, but Cliff was a good friend of mine. When I was in Metallica, he was the only one I admired as a person, or for anything, really, other than musical ability. We stayed really close, and when he passed away I got... just real morose and melancholy. And I got out my guitar, because," and here Mustaine's eyes blaze, "because my guitar is the only thing in my life that hasn't fucked me over. I started playing this sad kind of progression, and I felt it was like a funeral waltz, for me to give my respect to his spirit ascending to destiny."

Mustaine disdains labels; he once jokingly described Megadeth's music to a writer as "Mega-

reggae-jazz-fusion-punk-speed-glam-gore-Deth-metal" only to see the whole hyphenated mess appear in print. When it comes to Megadeth's audiences, he's a metal man all the way. "They're trying to take away our music, Tipper and all the rest of them," he says. "Advertisers won't advertise on stations that play metal because they apparently have this notion that all metalheads ever buy is beer and cocaine. That's why I tell the people at the shows that we have to stick together, to fight for our rights. How do you think I feel, walking down the street with hair as long as mine? Half the time I'm embarrassed to lift my head up because we've got a general public that perceives someone who looks like me as bein' either a woman or a drug addict. It's a lot better when I'm on stage performing, not because I'm some arrogant rock star but because then people can recognize that you're not just some dumb fuck walking down the street, you're an attractive person and you've got a brain. The kids we attract are not retards, plenty of them are real smart, they just aren't buying into the shit people are trying to sell them. That's one thing I'd like to accomplish with this band; I'd like to show everybody that we're watching what's going down, and we're thinking about it. And if we're together, maybe we can do something about it."

To that end, Mustaine and his frequent cowriter Ellefson have been penning some of the most observant, penetrating, and timely songs in recent rock, whatever the category. "What do you mean, I don't support your system? I go to court when I have to," Mustaine argued in the last album's title track and current tour's set closer, the already-classic "Peace Sells." "And what do you mean, I don't pay my bills? Why do you think I'm broke? Huh?" The song moves from personal to global perspective, with Mustaine asking, "Can you put a price on peace? Peace sells...but who's buying?"

Megadeth's first album, *Killing Is My Business...And Business Is Good*, had its share of rocking reportage, but musically it was a muddy beginning, mired in the then-emerging thrash-metal sludge style. *Peace Sells...But Who's Buying?*, produced by Mustaine and Randy Burns for metal-indie Combat Core and almost immediately snatched up by Capitol, established the Megadeth sound in all its glory, but the band began getting a reputation as an erratic performing unit; tensions came to a head when the General drummed guitarist Chris Poland and percussionist Gar Samuelson out of the corps, two weeks before sessions for the next album were scheduled to begin.

Bringing in the new recruits did little to alter the massive throb that is Megadeth's sound, but it does seem to have made the live shows substantially more consistent, and more powerfully integrated. With the new rhythm section of Ellefson's agile bass and Chuck Behler's fatback drums, the band has increased rhythmic precision, more tightly-meshed grooves, and, a rarity in metal but not in great rock 'n' roll bands, a kind of shadowboxing-style, a light-on-the-feet momentum that an unprejudiced jazzier might recognize as swing.

Ellefson still looks like the fresh-faced Minnesota farm boy he was before he graduated from high school and moved to Los Angeles. He met his new upstairs neighbor Dave Mustaine when the General, annoyed by the confluence of Ellefson's morning bass workout and his own throbbing hangover, threw a flowerpot out his window to shatter on the young bassist's air conditioner. "And then Mustaine yelled, 'Now shut the fuck up!'" Ellefson recalls fondly as he finds a seat near the front of the bus, which by this time is nearing the outskirts of Pittsburgh. "So right away I figured I had to meet



him. And although I had never heard of this band he'd been in, Metallica—it was before their first album, they were like an unknown club band—I liked a lot of the music he was writing. The kind of music we're playing, we like ■ to be real structured; it's *composed*. The way a lot of the stuff gets written is, we start writing riffs. We might get one good riff in a night. Then we usually compile a lot of the new riffs on a tape, and from there we take 'em and we arrange the riffs together to make a song, rather than starting with, like, ■ verse, then a chorus. That way, we figure, you get more riffs per dollar on every record."

Ellelson flashes a grin that has been known to melt hearts and antagonize boyfriends. "We write the riffs," he goes on, "to get to the feel the song will have, because the feel and the attitude are the most important things for us. This is a riff band; we don't have much use for real flashy guitar playing. You can play all kinds of licks, but unless people can relate to what you're doing, who cares?"

"Now, the General gets a lot of praise for being the guitar player that he is, but he doesn't play all these flashy tricks. And he doesn't play from the heart; if you play from the heart, as far as I'm concerned, you're writing love songs. It's more like he plays from his gut. We all play from the gut, from outta the fucking BOWELS."

"I really dig playing with Chuck on drums," says Ellelson. "He's got that heavy, John Bonham stomp, yet he's almost laid back a little bit behind the beat. Which is cool; you can groove a lot easier with that. 'It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing,' I believe that. In heavy metal it might not be 'swing' the way some people understand it, but there's gotta be a groove there. And the fast parts don't mean anything unless you can stop and settle into a slower groove, like we do with 'In My Darkest Hour,' it just makes it that much clearer how fast the fast stuff really is. It's like having sex. You gotta climax, but you don't just start out fast, there's gotta be foreplay, and then you get a groove, and it climaxes, and then you kind of have your decrescendo there at the end."

The talk grows incoherent, the night grows long. Sex and music, music and sex. This is ■ band that likes to have fun, and it's a bleary-eyed group that stumbles off the bus into another sleazy, under-heated motel in the wee hours. But the next day, the quartet is in the dressing room several hours before the gig—their own gig. At first each musician appears to be off in his own little warm-up world—the very young and constantly practicing Jeff Young ripping off impossibly fast arpeggios standing in a tiled shower stall, drummer Behler beating out tribal rhythms on chairs and phone books, Mustaine practicing scales and inversions, and only Ellelson temporarily out of pocket—"probably a blow job," smirks Mustaine.

As afternoon turns to evening, and Ellelson returns (with a suspiciously silly grin on his face), the separate practicing just seems to mesh naturally, each player's riffs folding into all the others until the dressing room is shaking to one sound, deep, reverberating elemental. Call it speed-metal, thrash, metal-punk crossover, but don't let the categories confuse you: This is a rock 'n' roll band, and my guess is it's going to be a great one.

The new album's hard, hard sound, and the songs—about nuclear holocaust; drunken driving citations; Tipper's follies; the true tale of a young Minneapolis girl whose father discovered she was practicing witchcraft and buried her alive; anarchy at home and abroad; and other real-world topics—suggest Megadeth's commitment to going its own

*Continued on page 81*

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# BRING ON THE NIGHT



John Gaudin



John Gaudin

One a.m., Sunday night, on the west coast of Manhattan. A February wind sweeps the morning's newspapers in concentric circles two stories up over Tenth Avenue. A little to the south, transvestite prostitutes drum spiked heels over the cobblestones of the meat packing district. To the north, behind the post office, are the Westies, the Irish equivalent of wise guys. To the east are the projects, and beyond them, the lines of gentrification; to the west is the river.

But here in this corridor of west Chelsea, at one in the morning on a holiday weekend there is nothing but the weathered steel garage doors of warehouses, leftovers of a shipping industry that long ago moved south to Bayonne, New Jersey. And there are kids.

They start to materialize at about a quarter to ten, in isolated pockets scrambling west out of the projects, and by one o'clock they are in full force. On Tenth Avenue, four Latin men, in their teens or just beyond, leap from the descending platform of a parking garage elevator five feet before it reaches street level. At the north corner, four definitely teenage Latin girls in boxy black leather car coats and gold hoop earrings wait at the light, doing their best to ignore their three male counterparts on the south corner. A posse of girls walking west drop their overlapping narratives and avoid eye contact with the boys in the voluminous fur parkas or Task Force varsity jackets perched on the still warm hood of a black Pontiac. The boys stare blankly past, then crane their necks to watch as the girls pass. From 27th Street, a cluster of kids in fleeced, bleached denim jackets moves south toward an idling patrol car, locked in accidental symmetry with another group walking north from 25th. A white Nova, its smoked windows throbbing to a loud disco pulse, edges past a double-parked stretch limousine, then darts into an illegal parking place.

Article by John Leland





Far left: Sa-  
Fire's "Let Me  
Be the One"  
defines the new  
disco; hard  
rhythms, hard  
sexuality. Left:  
Noel (left) with  
producer/re-  
mixer/deejay  
Little Louie  
Vega.

Everyone is in a hurry. When they finally converge on the throng already gathered outside a maroon awning on 26th Street, everyone will have to wait. At Hearthrob, the uniformed security guards take their work seriously, and a really thorough frisking takes some time. The doorman waves the girls in the leather car coats to the front of the line, leaving nothing but boys on the sidewalk. Nobody complains.

Inside, the cavernous warehouse is dark except for the pixilated glow of a half dozen video monitors, and silent except for the ejaculatory screams of about three thousand dancers. Last night the place was on the dead side, and girls outnumbered boys by about three to two. But tonight, with no school tomorrow, Hearthrob is jammed, body against body, mostly male, under 20, and Latin, mashing together in the sticky miasma of sweat, perfume, wet fur, styling gel, and cologne. "Bango! Bango!" the dancers shout in fair unison, and the massive public address system brings the beat back, fast, staccato, jolting them convulsively into motion. "Bango! Bango!" one more time, and the beat is back to stay. A conga line of about two dozen bodies, the boys in baseball caps or arctic fur helmets and Avia sneakers, the girls in calf-length stretch pants or bleached jeans and baggy, horizontally striped cotton sweaters, bounces haltingly through the heavy traffic, accruing members as it moves along. Over by the bar, where twin murals of a tropical sunset gaze down on a brisk trade of flat three-dollar sodas, Sno-Kones, and two brands of non-alcoholic beer, two girls who can't be more than fifteen enjoy a last fling at Vogueing, last summer's popular dance parody of fashion spread poses. At the other end of the room, across a floor full of freestylers, a black man in nylon warmups garners enough space to hurl his body through the Webbo, a reminder of the days when this room was the Funhouse, Jellybean Benitez's playground, before the Bay Ridge Boys, Filthy Mad Dogs, and other gangs shut it down.

Another Funhouse holdover, a floor-to-ceiling dayglo plaster clown face spewing ropes of blue hair, smiles grotesquely over the darkened dance floor. And out of the window that is the clown's mouth, Little Louie Vega surveys the crowd.

The house is full tonight, and though there will be a live performance later, it is for Little Louie that most of the kids have come. Down Tenth Avenue, Roman Ricardo spins records for another 4,000 slightly older, predominantly Puerto Rican, Dominican, and Cuban dancers at 10\*18; to the north, Scott Blackwell commands nearly as big a crowd of Italians mixed with Latins at 4D, and thousands more, better dressed dancers pack the gaping maws of Studio 54 and Roseland, both of which have in the last couple of months become Latin hot spots. But for the Hispanic teenagers of the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, and Manhattan, Little Louie Vega is the guy.

Inside the deejay booth, Vega cues up a test pressing of "Like a Child" by Noel, which he just finished producing with Ricardo. The record isn't in stores or on the radio yet, but both deejays have been playing it on reel-to-reel for a couple of weeks, and at the first hint of the heavy electronic beat, synthesized string embellishments, and Depeche Mode-ish exaggerated crooning, Hearthrob erupts. Vega cuts out all the midrange frequencies, including Noel's voice, leaving the crowd to carry the chorus on its own. They surprise him by continuing,

about a thousand of them, all the way through the next verse. "How could you lie to me," they chant, like a sexually tormented soccer crowd, "Your actions don't vouch for what you say/I'm just like a child at play/And you're like the toy you tried to take away from me."

It is early still, but the dancers are beginning to work hard, and as he looks out past a graffiti reading "Lil' Louie Rocks the House," Vega permits himself a smile. For the next hour and a half, until the show starts, he can push them harder still with a steady progression of squeaky local Latin sirens: Sa-Fire, the Cover Girls, Nayobe, Double Destiny, Nocera, and Tina B. All of the records, like those he'll throw in by TKA, Information Society, and the Latin Rascals, are written, produced, mixed, remixed, and performed, or some combination thereof, by Vega and his closest friends: Andy "Panda" Tripoli, Tony Moran and Albert Cabrera of the Latin Rascals, Joey Gardner, and Aldo Marin. All under 25, barrio kids with little or no musical background, they giggle comfortably when they call themselves the new brat pack, architects of the next wave of New York dance music.

"I'd compare it to the early Motown days," says Andy Tripoli, pausing to stir five packets of sugar into a cup of near black coffee. "It's like the early Supremes or Smokey Robinson, which was local, which was considered street and urban, and it just blossomed into something big. I see the same thing happening now."

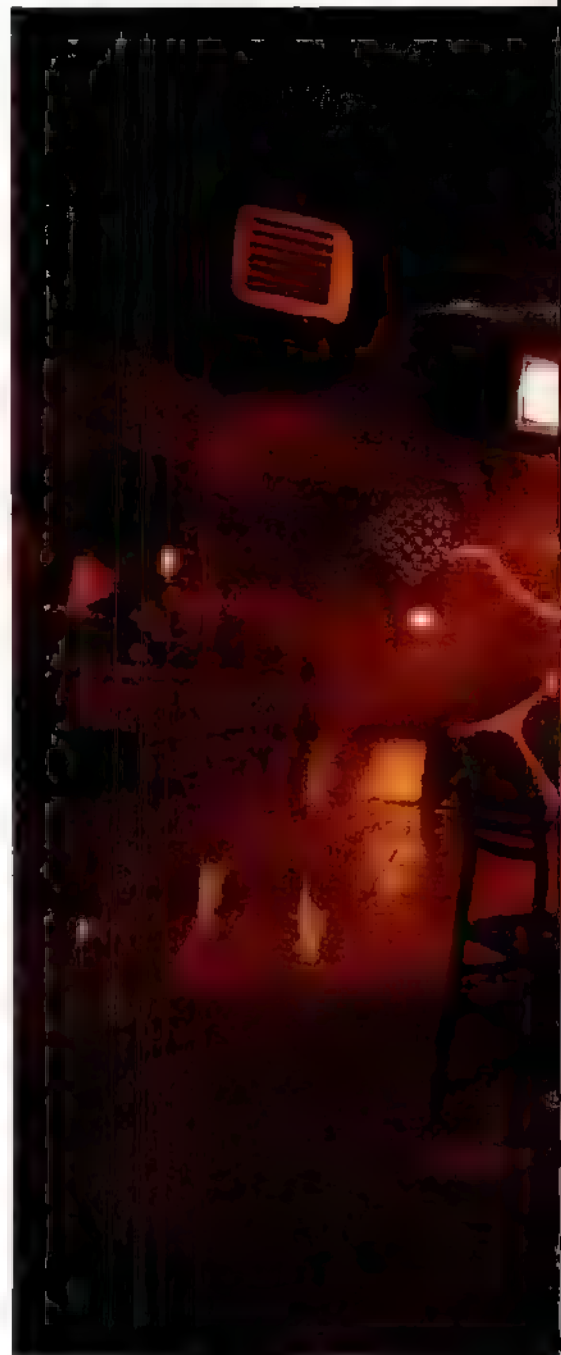
"Quite honestly, I don't see success as doing a record for Mick Jagger. I think it's time for a new Mick Jagger. It's time for a new Phil Collins, new producers, new writers, new artists. And I think that we're proving ourselves now."

In 1984, Nayobe Catalina Gomez, a slender, 16-year-old black Cuban from the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, sang at a block party given by the RPBC record pool on 116th Street in East Harlem. She'd won ten consecutive Gong Show contests at Disco Fever, the pioneering Bronx rap club, and earned a recording contract with Fever Records. She sang three songs: Pat Benatar's "Love Is a Battlefield," Barbra Streisand's "Memories," and Jocelyn Brown's "Somebody Else's Guy." After the party, Tripoli approached her with a song of his own, the first and at the time only one he had ever written.

"It was very Latinish," she remembers, "and I was the only one that liked it at first. At the time, there weren't really any Latin records around." WKTU-FM, the disco station of choice among Latin New Yorkers, had switched to classic rock, and hadn't been replaced. With no radio play to speak of, Nayobe's "Please Don't Go," produced by 20-year-old Andy Tripoli, became the top club record in New York and the top record overall in Miami for 1985, edging out USA for Africa's "We Are the World." Less than six months later, two groups of Miami Cubans, Exposé and the Miami Sound Machine, scored nationwide pop hits with overtly Latin dance records. By the time Lisa Lisa and TKA followed onto the pop charts, a new generation of Latinos had begun to assert itself in the American mainstream.

"Our music is based upon the same thing as the Miami music," says Tony Moran of the Latin Rascals, "but theirs is . . . not weaker, but less intense. We are the aggressors of dance music. We take a record by the throat, and it's like, 'in your face.'"

Like Tripoli and later Curtis Khaleel of Man-



Dawn at Hearthrob.





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Chris Green





**"We're just like what Jellybean and Arthur Baker used to be. We just did it at a younger age."**

tronix, Moran and Albert Cabrera began their musical education in Downtown Records, a Manhattan store specializing in dance singles. Moran, a beige-skinned Colombian from East New York, was the store deejay; Cabrera used to bring in cassettes of custom mixes he'd edited at home. Carlos DeJesus, program director of WKTU, heard one of the tapes in the store and asked the two 19-year-olds to customize mixes for the radio. Three months later, they were editing dance records for Arthur Baker: crossover bids by Bruce Springsteen, Diana Ross, Hall & Oates, David Bowie, the Rolling Stones, the Cars, and dozens of others.

"We talk about how we're just like what Jellybean and Arthur used to be," says Moran, smiling. "Jellybean used to play at the Funhouse, and Arthur used to come in with reel-to-reels of new music like [Afrika Bambaataa & Soulsonic Force's] 'Planet Rock.' Now I do the same thing. Louie's playing at Hearthrob, I go in there and I put on a tape, and we see the reactions in the exact same way. It's so funny how history repeats itself. We just did it at a lot younger age."

Three a.m. at Hearthrob, and what remains of the conga line is stalled permanently in the unnavigable sludge of bobbing teenage flesh. The catfight that threatened to flare up a few minutes ago seems to have resolved itself peacefully. Two security guards carrying club-sized flashlights stand by, just in case. An unscheduled black comedian succeeds the second of four musical acts on what looks like a ropeless boxing ring rising out of the dance floor. "Yo, check it, you know why black people drive big cars?" he asks the audience. "'Cause we're big motherfuckers."

Inside the deejay booth, Little Louie Vega is 64 inches of nervous. "If the show goes too long," he says, looking out, "they get edgy."

The comedian paces the stage. "You Latins can fit fifteen or twenty of you in one car, I'm serious."

The deejay booth is jammed. Andy Tripoli and Tony Moran yell, "that boy," in unison, and hug robustly. Mickey Garcia, who produces C-Bank and tonight's headliner, Judy Torres, hands Vega a reel of tape. Eddie Rivera, head of the RPBC record pool, to which all of these guys belong, chuckles at the comedian's routine. Beneath a big graffiti mural reading "Jellybean," George Vascones, Torres's manager, looks at his watch and sweats. Her record is hot right now, and Hearthrob will be the fifth of six clubs she hits tonight, singing to a backup tape. The money on the Latin disco circuit is good these days, upwards of \$3,000 for ten minutes of passion, but the time is getting real tight.

As the comedian surrenders the stage to a disc jockey from WQHT (Hot-103), the station which since August of 1986 has filled the gap left by WKTU, the next act tries to wedge its way through the crowd to the platform. George Vascones drops his head and rubs his eye sockets. Louie Vega hustles a copy of "Let No Man Put Asunder," by First Choice, onto the turntable, and the whole room begins to vibrate. "This is a classic for them," he says.

The roots of this music, which everyone but the kids themselves seems to want to call Latin hip hop, lie partly in the Funhouse, and in the fusion of rap beats and European synthesizer textures that Arthur Baker and John Robie explored with Soulsonic Force and New Order.

Like the aftermath of the English new wave—the Pet Shop Boys, Depeche Mode, Soft Cell—the music also marks an intersection of a musically illiterate youth culture with a technology that makes literacy unnecessary: inexpensive digital samplers, drum machines, MIDI networks. But to the crowd at Hearthrob, that is only half the story.

"We put together this whole format," claims Vito Bruno, who now runs 10•18 and manages Noel and Double Destiny. "You know where it started from, right? The Inferno."

Bruno, the most voluble and by far the largest man on the circuit, opened the Inferno in the latter days of the Funhouse. "There were a lot of kids," he says, "who weren't coming to the Roxy [a rap club] 'cause the music was too hard, and wouldn't go to the [Paradise] Garage 'cause the music was too soft."

"So I went out to all the boroughs looking for kids, specifically kids that had a certain look: the curly hair coming down the middle, little razor cuts on the side of the heads, a little long down the back. Baggy clothes, shorts or karate pants, and funny shoes, the girls with exaggerated accessories, bright colors. As opposed to the hip hop girls, who would wear little tight leather caps, gold earrings only, lots of gold around, more subtle colors, everything matching. It was a look. And we went out and hand-delivered invitations to them."

"The problem was, you got the kids, what do you play for them? There were no records that existed at that time. So we'd take some softer hip hop beats, and play a cappella things over them, like what's her name, the fat chick? Loleatta Holloway. We had lines up the block. Then slowly, the records started to come out: the first Exposé single, Mantronix."

Noel Pagan, a Puerto Rican dropout from the Bronx, began hanging out at the Inferno when he was fifteen. By then he had graduated from the Young Skulls, the underage chapter of the Savage Skulls street gang, and joined the HBO's, or Homeboys Only. "There was a dance that people did at the Inferno called the Uprock," he remembers. "Two guys would throw themselves to the floor, stand up, and lash out at each other. That used to start a lot of violence. One kid would hit the other kid, and then everybody would just start fighting." A week or two after Noel got bounced from the club for fighting with one of the Ballbusters, a rival gang, Bruno hired him as a busboy. By the time the police eventually padlocked the club to put an end to the carnage, Noel had written the lyrics to "Silent Morning," and found something he liked as much as fighting.

He is now something of a rarity on the circuit, a male performer in a field dominated by women. Latin hip hop is, among other things, the fantasy of a clique of male songwriters and producers, projected through a series of pretty, often interchangeable female singers.

The Cover Girls, for example, are the fantasy of Andy Tripoli. He had always wanted to create a girl group, something like the Ronettes or the Supremes. After his moderate success with Nayobe, he wrote a song, "Show Me," came up with the group name and concept, and began auditioning singers. "There were hundreds of girls," recalls Caroline, who will not give her age. "We had to sing, dance, and had a personal interview. They were trying to get three glamorous girls who could wear high-fashion clothes yet have a lot of fun on stage. We had never met before they called us in a week lat-

er." When Angel, the lead singer, announced last winter that she wanted to leave the group, Tripoli just held more auditions. "Look at *Exposé*," he says. "They went and changed all three girls. I'm not too concerned with it."

Though records like Amoretto's "Clave Rocks" and Sa-Fire's "Let Me Be the One" form the adventurous edge of the music, the Cover Girls are what everybody wants: a polished marketing package that can cross over to a pop audience *and* make pretty nifty singles—someone to repeat the success of Madonna, Lisa Lisa, or Debbie Gibson, all of whom came out of the Latin clubs. "Show Me," launched by Hearstrob and the early broadcasts of Hot-103, reached the pop Top 50. The current single, "Because of You," written by Louie Vega and Robert Clivilles, will go much higher. The group has a gold album in Japan; demonstrating the plasticity of a good package, a trio of Japanese girls called Yukari Morikawa scored a No. 1 single with a cover version of "Show Me."

"I don't even know the meaning of pop any more," says Vega. "Look at 'Because of You.' It's a great song. It's No. 30 on the pop charts. You come hear this record at Hearthrob, and it's a Latin hip hop record."

"We're starting to show what we can do," says Tripoli. "At first it was like, 'Oh, they're just deejays who remix a record so it can be played in a club.' Then it went from remixing to producing. Now we're writing and producing and remixing, and we're throwing new artists into the mainstream."

**A** little before four a.m., Hearthrobs Teenage hands reach out to touch Judy Torres as her manager hustles her toward the exit. A cadre of bouncers runs interference, but the kids press together tightly. "Oh my God," shrieks a tiny girl in a bouffant, "Judy Torres." Tears stream from her eyes as she looks at her palm, then holds it up to show her friends. They look at it, touch it, then scream, together, "Judy Torrrr-ressss." The girl is still crying as George Vascones, really sweating now, escorts Torres out the door and into their limousine.

In the deejay booth, Little Louie Vega cues up Area Code 615's "Stone Fox Chase." A beautiful coffee-colored woman who stands a head taller than him gently strokes his back.

**W**e go into the studio," says Tony Moran, "we'll pump out a record, we're happy, we're laughing, we're eating tons of candy and food, and throwing things at each other. We all drop in on each other all the time, at every session, playing practical jokes. Just really adolescent things, which keeps us . . . I don't know, adolescent, I guess.

"I feel like I'm getting older, but what I look forward to on the weekend is going to Hearthrob. I feel these are my people, not in an ethnic sort of way, but in an adolescent, freestyle sort of way. They make me feel good, they make me feel free. Because the thing about being young is that you don't base anything on fact, you base everything on feel.

"We always go out to eat together, me and Albert and Andy Tripoli and Joey Gardner and Little Louie Vega. And since we started changing our taste as we're getting older, it's like we all go to eat sushi together, and we're eating this, and we're going, 'What are we doing in here, we're eating sushi? It's disgusting.' It's like something that you would see in a John Hughes film."



Above: Nayobe's "Please Don't Go," a Latin disco record in a non-Latin market, launched two careers and prefigured a movement. Right: relaxing at Hearthrob.

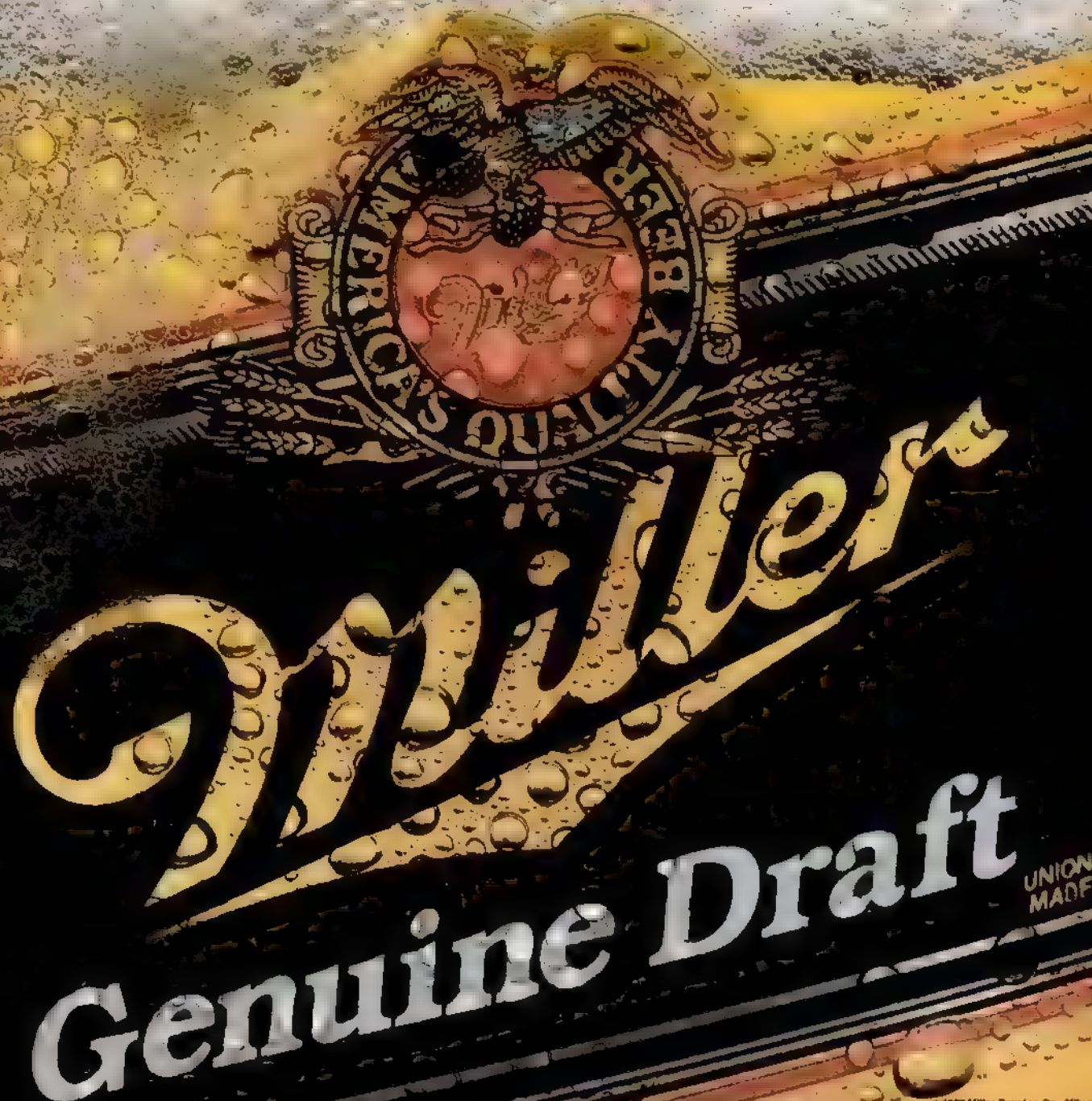


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# Naked Heads

The Talking Heads  
explain their world to John Miller Chernoff, author of  
African Rhythm, African Sensibility.

Photograph by Barbara Walz/ONYX

I met David Byrne and Jerry Harrison in 1981. I didn't meet Chris Frantz and Tina Weymouth until a few years later, though oddly enough, Chris and I attended the same high school in Pittsburgh, PA. I found actual common ground with the Talking Heads because I had spent most of the Seventies in Ghana studying music, and I had written a book entitled *African Rhythm and African Sensibility* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), in which I tried to explain something about the expressive purposes of African drumming and how it fits into the flow of African social life and the rhythms of African musical contexts. The book was written for a diverse audience, and as it happened—as it usually happens—musicians were the first to find it. The Talking Heads were among those who read it early, and when I became aware of their work in *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* and *Remain in Light*, I wrote a letter to David suggesting that we might hook up some time and talk. A similar letter from him crossed mine in the mail, resulting in our friendship and my work with him on *The Catherine Wheel*.

When David suggested that I be involved with that work, my first thought was, "Why in the world, if this guy's in New York, does he want me to come and deal with the percussion?" The answer only became apparent to me in the sessions. On *Big Business*, I played the parts of a drum orchestra with pencil erasers on a guitar while he worked the frets. On *Combat*, I played the parts of a different drum ensemble on a piano he had modified by wrapping masking tape around some of the strings. I could deal with any of that, but I realized that even the pop musicians I knew in Africa, who were so interested in developing a sound which could cross the ocean, might have been perplexed. On many levels, David and I were coming from the same place.

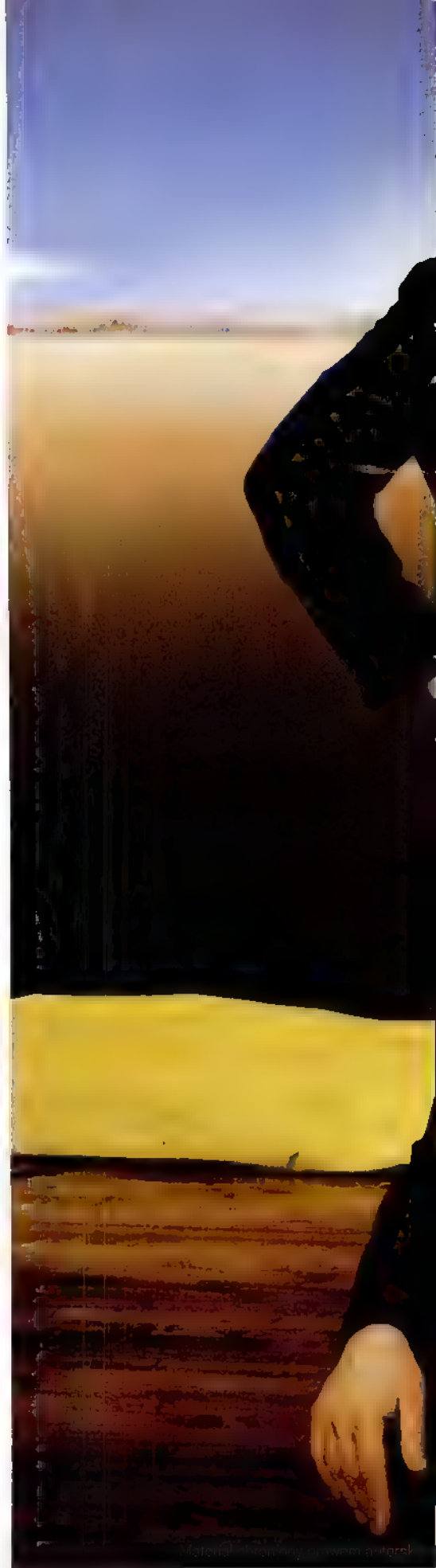
I was amazed at the way that David handled me both as a person and as a musical resource:

he always seemed to have a very clear conception of his purpose, yet I felt as if he was never telling me what to do. It was a very congenial way to work. We all parted on very good terms when, after making my contribution, I went back to Africa to continue work on another book, to be published next year, called *A Drummer's Testament*. We stayed loosely in touch, and when *Spin* asked me to interview the Talking Heads, we all welcomed the opportunity to meet together again. Chris, Tina, Jerry, David and I sat down at David's place in New York; we started talking and as usual, we still hadn't finished talking when we said good-bye fourteen hours later.

**SPIN:** First, I want to congratulate you on your new record. It brings together a lot of different things you've done, and it retains your identity, but it also pulls together the beauty of many of the different influences you've been dealing with. To begin with, I want to ask why you decided to record in Paris with African musicians?

**Chris Frantz:** Paris in the summer versus Eighth Avenue in New York City is really not too hard a decision to make. And also we knew that there was a burgeoning cross-cultural or pan-cultural music scene in Paris. We were aware of that. We weren't aware of how much we would be able to take advantage of it, but as it happened, we got this guy, Wally Badarou, who is a friend of ours, to put the word out among quite a few different people, that we were coming to town, making a record, and looking for additional players. So by the time we got there, he had made sure that we got to know a few of the better players—guys who have actually played in studios before, as opposed to—well, we did get a couple of guys who hadn't been in a studio.

**Jerry Harrison:** We had this guy. I had known Fela's managers. When we talked to







Wally, I also talked to one guy, and one day he sent over a percussionist. This percussionist said, "I have to tighten the heads." "OK, great." So he goes into the bathroom, which was basically under the control room, and starts a fire and puts the drum over the fire! And flames are leaping up. We were coughing in the control room! We went to the bathroom, and there were big scorch marks on the wall.

**SPIN:** If I had to compare *Naked* to something, I would compare it to Manu Dibango, who fuses funk, reggae, African, and Caribbean beats all together, and it's a seamless whole. On many of his records, it's all there, yet it's not forced. And I think that *Naked* is also one of those few records that really brings it all together. *Naked* is something that you could take to Africa and play in a disco, and the people there would enjoy the grooves and be dancing to it. But it's Talking Heads, definitely and identifiably so. So maybe we should get into how you worked the music out for the new record. Did you work in the same way that you did in the past?

**Jerry Harrison:** Each time we set out to make an album, we set up different conditions for making the record, and by setting up the different conditions, we make sure that the albums sound different. For instance, for this record, starting here by composing the music as a foursome, but then going to Paris and adding other musicians, and then recording it all at once, it seems more jelled sometimes than if we had done it with studio overdubs. There's something about it just combining in the air that's different. And that was different from say, either *Remain in Light* or *Speaking in Tongues*, which were also composed music-first, because those were done as overdubs within the studio. So that was a great lesson from *Remain in Light*, that if you're going to work in that way—music first, then melody and lyrics second—it's good to make some decisions early on, because it makes the next process a little less like threading a needle. I think we're more sophisticated about it now.

**David Byrne:** I feel about those earlier records as if in some cases you were aware of how the pieces of the machine were put together. They fit together, but at the same time, you were aware that there was kind of an intricate clockwork thing that was being carefully put together in the recording studio. I was very happy with it. I felt it was exploratory. Not everything worked out great, but I think most of it did. But a lot of it has that feeling of being music that is looking to do this, do that, looking at all these kinds of things you can do. And often it doesn't explore those avenues. It just points to them, or dabbles in them a little bit, which was fine. Yes, the stuff worked out fine. I'm happy with it. I still listen to it sometimes. Usually I come back to it before we go in to make a record. I sometimes have a spot-list of a lot of the stuff from the past. I guess I listen to it to get a sense of: well, what kind of music do Talking Heads make? It's like taking stock of what we do, before stepping out into the unknown. Then, at that time I think we were taking our understanding of music we were hearing, and we were kind of translating it into our own terms, into electronic synthesizers and all kinds of stuff like that. And it was like a process of discovery, a way of discovering what it is. To me, the new album feels more like it was played, and that's the way it came out. Obviously the arrangements were worked out carefully, but it feels more like what it actually was: we pretty much played the stuff and then added the spice later on.

**SPIN:** How much did you rely on the African musi-



Chris Collins/Warner Bros.

cians in this situation?

**David Byrne:** In some things quite a lot; in some things not so much. I'll recapitulate it in this way: we'd work out a little structure that was more song-like, a little arrangement on a lot of the stuff we had recorded together, and then there would be the four of us joined by at least two other musicians, sometimes a third one. Usually it was a drummer, on congas—or there were some African drums that sound a little bit like congas but have a different name—a guitar player, and sometimes a keyboard player, or a percussionist who would play the bell or sticks or whatever. And the idea was that the groove would be determined by the interaction of everybody, everybody would accommodate the other people, and it wouldn't be, "Well I'm going to do this, and that's what I'm going to play." The idea would be more that when somebody else does something, you accommodate to them. You make it so that the totality works rather than it being individual parts, and they're all going together. We had a lot of stuff to start with. And we felt pretty strongly about that, so when we were joined by these other musicians, we could either stick with what we had or let it flow into whatever way it went, which often happened. A song like "(Nothing But) Flowers" obviously would have been very different if it just had one guitar on it. The whole feel is all those guitars going in and out.

**SPIN:** Well, you've really got it down, because a lot of people have tried to learn to play like the Zairians and found it difficult to get it just right. And it sounds right.

**David Byrne:** Yes. I was real happy. We traded off through the solos at the end of the tune, Yves, the other guitar player and I. We traded off little solos at the end of the tune, and I was thrilled that he and the drummer, Abdu, thought that my playing was pretty "roots," that it was very natural, and they complimented me on it and said that there were parts of that jamming instrumental thing when you couldn't tell which licks he was playing and which licks I was playing. We'd just be going in and out, and it was a wonderful feeling. We really felt as if

we were—whatever—jumping cultural boundaries, and we were feeling pretty good about it, feeling kind of proud of ourselves.

**Tina Weymouth:** Well, Yves from the Cameroons said to me, in French, "He plays like someone from the country, *du pays*." He said that of David, which was a nice compliment.

**SPIN:** Given the growing success that you've had, getting a larger and larger audience, do you think it's a risky thing to do, to deal with an African collaboration more than exploring further the dimensions of your recent work like *Little Creatures* and *True Stories*?

**David Byrne:** I guess it is, in a way. It's certainly not geared towards a lot of what's currently on the Top Ten or what's on the radio. But I think we'd feel it would be more risky not to do something. I would hope that the people who like our stuff like it because they never know what's going to happen next, that they like it because it's kind of a surprise package. And I would hope that that's the attraction, that you don't fall too much in love with any one kind of thing. I would hope that they would fall in love with the unpredictability of it.

**SPIN:** You are the kind of people who have got the reputation of being innovative, and people are expecting you to be innovative. If you do something that they've heard before, they're going to criticize you for that.

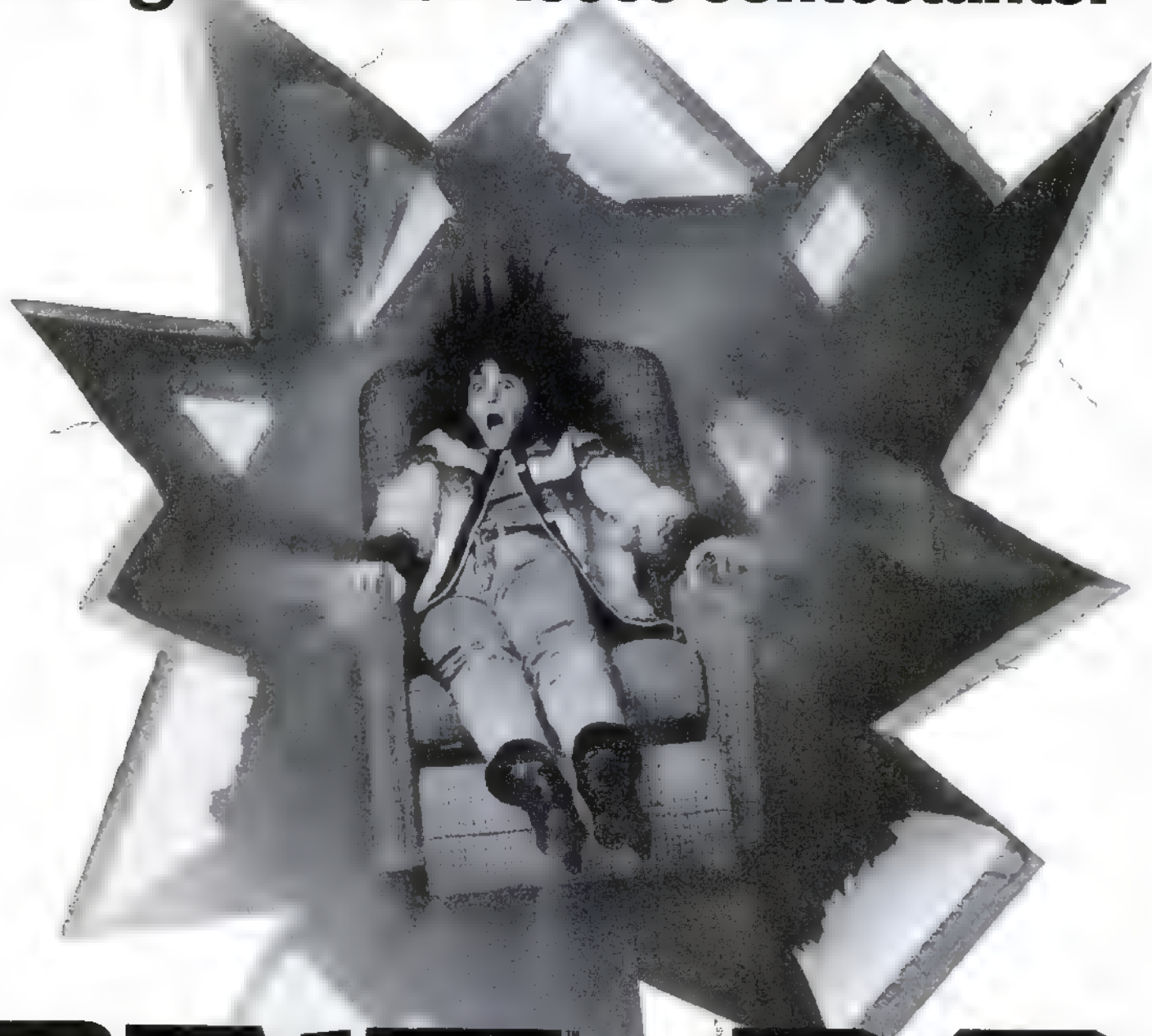
**Chris Frantz:** It kind of happened on the last record. They said, "What is this? Are they just in a holding pattern? What's going to happen next?"

**David Byrne:** For us to play that kind of music was experimental for us.

**Tina Weymouth:** And I would say for David as a singer, it had to be a challenge. When you change from doing something which is completely in our own style and therefore doesn't really have to compete with anybody else, to try to do something in the style of others, where you know there are great



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# **REMOTE CONTROL**

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**"This percussionist said, 'I have to tighten the heads.' So he goes into the bathroom, which was basically under the control room, and starts a fire and puts the drum over the fire! And flames are leaping up."**



Paul Schreyer

singers who can do that, or for any of us to play any of the instruments and know that there are great players, it's a whole other thing.

**Jerry Harrison:** I think that all of us have a similar vision in that we like doing different things. I think we're all very happy with the fact that the Talking Heads have made albums that have different places of focus. *True Stories* and *Little Creatures* were certainly the albums that were most clearly written by David alone. But this new album or *Remain in Light* or *Speaking in Tongues* were really done as a foursome, music-first. *Little Creatures* and *True Stories* were the other way around: they were much more melodic and had kind of American song structures. In *Little Creatures*, for instance, we very deliberately used instruments like organs and accordions for the keyboard player; I didn't use very synthesized sounds. We were trying to get into it like that. And I think "City of Dreams" is one of the most beautiful ballads David's ever written, and it used an acoustic piano. Each record follows a different path.

One of the things we wanted to not be is: around the world with the Talking Heads. I think the *Little Creatures* and *True Stories* period was also a little bit like: what are we going to do next, and what are we not going to do next. It wasn't, "OK, we did African music; now let's go do Indonesian gamelan," or some bullshit like that. I really consider there to be a clear link between African music and R&B and rock 'n' roll, and it had not been elucidated particularly clearly before. There are definite connections between Fela and James Brown. That's why we could learn about African music, because we had heard about that and read about that, and we loved James Brown, and we went and looked at it. Once we saw how great Fela was, we started looking at some of the other stuff. It wasn't because we were interested in Pygmy music or something like that. It came up from things that had already developed. It was as if we worked back from our culture, and then we realized things that

people had said about these connections. An obvious other place, and I know that David really loves it, is Brazilian music, which also has a very obvious connection to African music and how it's changed in the New World, and it's somehow still really related to the forms that you find in American R&B.

**Tina Weymouth:** I think that right at the start, we said to ourselves, well, we've set ourselves apart in a certain way. We can't sing like those people; we can't play like those people, and there are a lot of people out there pleasing the audience with that kind of music. We don't fit in that, but we still need to play and satisfy ourselves, for our own needs. So for us, it has to come from a much more personal thing; it has to please us personally as opposed to thinking of what's going to please other people. So far, that has been the best way that we have pleased people, by pleasing ourselves first. And if ever we tried to please people by doing something that was in the format of "known" music, say with *Little Creatures* or *True Stories*, it didn't seem to make things more successful for us to please everyone more than what we had done before.

**David Byrne:** I think we're all listening to somewhat different things. And then it's always kind of changing, so that every time we get together, everybody's got some new thing that they've been into or that they've grown into in their musical interests in some way over the past year or six months or whatever it is. And without even talking about it, it kind of comes out in playing. You see a different flavor in their playing.

There are things I like, and I feel that I still haven't been able to do them. I started to get into one a little bit: crooning. I get into a little bit of crooning on this record. I use the word "crooning" with my tongue in cheek, but I try to do some sweet singing, to sing as sweetly as I can, and that's not something I've done a lot of. Sometimes I can be sentimental, but I think that if a song gets too sentimental, then it gets shallow and loses a lot of depth to people. And

yet, that's something I think I touched on in this record, and I could do some more of.

**SPIN:** When you talk about pleasing people in your audience, are you thinking about anything specific?

**Chris Frantz:** I don't think any of us feel that we know exactly what we want all the time. I know I don't. I can't believe people who say they always know exactly what they want. Because if they do, where do the surprises come in?

**Tina Weymouth:** I think it's been thrilling for us to work with other musicians from completely different cultures and backgrounds, and to find that there was a complete sympathy and empathy with each other. That's very thrilling. And there have been moments on stage which practically induced a trance in both musicians and audience. Something happens which is hard to describe, a sense of being elevated and above and outside of ourselves, of sharing something that is the better part of ourselves, or a kind of overconsciousness or overview, that basically only happened when there seemed to be a kind of energy feedback between the audience and the performers, when you're not conscious so much of being a performer and how's that guy doing and monitoring what everyone's doing; you're doing what you do, and you're concentrating on that, and you've focused full attention on it. Most people compare thrilling experiences to sex because that's the most common thrill that people can all talk about and say, I had an ecstatic moment. And you hear musicians commonly refer to special musical moments as orgasmic because that's the way everyone can relate to it, but it's really beyond that. It becomes an involuntary reaction to something that is happening, and you start to operate at a much faster speed, where you seem to be expanding at a very, very fast rate, and things are

*Continued on page 76*



ANTHONY MICHAEL HALL

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# A.I.D.S.

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Words from the Front



If AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, then why do AIDS researchers refuse to look into the causes of Immune Deficiency? A close look at the possible cofactors of AIDS.

Column by Celia Farber

Illustration by Michelle Barnes

*"The man is not sick because he has an illness, but has an illness because he is sick."*

—Thomas Pable Paschero

"AIDS is not the mind boggling medical mystery they've made it out to be," says Dr. Joseph Sonnabend, a leading AIDS physician, as he closes the door to the cramped waiting room of his Greenwich Village practice, where ten young men are waiting to see him. "It's an immune deficiency, which is a common thing, and to understand AIDS





you have to understand what destroys the body's immunity."

His point is crucial. Because of the HIV theory, which says that the Human Immunodeficiency Virus is the sole cause of AIDS, other possible causes are being overlooked, despite overwhelming evidence that many things in the environment can damage and compromise a person's immune system. Although it's commonly known that the environment can have a terrific impact on health, we stubbornly ignore this in our search for AIDS

origins. Statistics suggest that AIDS, like most diseases, is primarily targeting those who are already weak and have, for various reasons, compromised immune systems.

"It is literally impossible to get AIDS if you're healthy," says Gary Null, an award-winning nutritionist who has been studying the lifestyles of people with AIDS for over two years. Although his statement would send most traditional AIDS doctors into a rage, he speaks without a trace of doubt. For over two years, Null has been questioning and monitoring over 300 homosexual men with AIDS and ARC, asking them if they used recreational drugs, drank, or smoked; what sexually transmitted diseases they had had. Had they had syphilis? How many sexual partners had they had each day? He even asked what they ate.

"All my research," Null concludes, "indicates that AIDS is a secondary infection that is precipitated by a primary immunodeficiency syndrome caused by multiple factors. As a result, the HIV virus in and of itself is virtually innocuous. To get AIDS, you require either syphilis or gonorrhea, parasites, chronic drug use, alcohol use, environmental pollutants, or poor diet." "I've been listening to stories about AIDS every night for the past five years," agrees Gene Fedorko, president of HEAL (Health Education AIDS Liaison), New York City's leading healing group for people with AIDS, "and it's my conclusion that only people with already compromised immune systems are susceptible to AIDS."

According to this "multifactorial" theory, each of the "risk groups" for AIDS—homosexual men, intravenous drug users, hemophiliacs, blood transfusion recipients and people from impoverished regions of Africa—have been weakened by one or several factors, which range from intense drug use and high sexual activity to malnutrition and exposure to environmental toxins.

The generally accepted, though recently disputed, theory is that HIV infects the T-helper cells which comprise the immune system, and kills them, crippling the body's immunity, thus leaving it susceptible to illness. But eight years into the epidemic, we're still stuck on the question of why HIV, if it is in fact the sole cause of AIDS, is deadly in some cases and harmless in others. Statistics tell us that up to 1.5 million Americans are believed infected with HIV, yet only 52 thousand have developed AIDS, and those cases have, so far, been largely contained within the "risk groups." Recent studies show that HIV cannot be detected in any form in up to 20% of all AIDS patients.

These and other facts suggest that something else, perhaps in combination with HIV infection, is causing AIDS.

"If you look at the environment and the lifestyles of people who have AIDS, you see that there are many causes," says Dr. Sonnabend, who was one of the founders of AMFAR (American Foundation for AIDS Research) and one of the first dissenters of

the HIV-AIDS theory. "It is so clear that the so-called 'AIDS virus' is not what is causing this, and I think the medical establishment has done a tremendous disservice by shifting the focus from environmental factors to this one virus. None of these factors alone causes disease, but if you add them all up, over a period of time, the end result is AIDS. One real problem is that our AIDS researchers are sitting in laboratories studying this disease and they know nothing about the environment of the patient."

In looking at AIDS in gay men, who still constitute the majority, 66%, of all AIDS cases, Sonnabend emphasizes the high sexual activity that came to characterize gay culture during the sexual revolution of the Sixties and Seventies, as a severe health threat. Almost all gay men with AIDS have a history of repeated viral and bacterial infections like hepatitis, syphilis, gonorrhea, herpes, etc. This repeated infectious assault on the body, coupled with an exaggerated use of antibiotics to treat the infections, is extremely harmful to the immune system.

"By the age of 27," Mike Callen, a gay man who has had AIDS for almost six years recalls, "I estimate that I had had 3,000 different sex partners. I'd also had fifteen sexually transmitted diseases, including herpes I and II, all strains of hepatitis, and syphilis. The question for me wasn't why I was sick with AIDS but rather how I had been able to remain standing on two feet for so long."

Callen, who cofounded the People With AIDS Coalition in New York City, and is the author of a book and numerous articles on AIDS, says that he has known "thousands" of people with AIDS and that every single one "fit the bill," of either a high level of sexual activity, heavy drug use, or both. "I've been kicked out of AIDS support groups for saying this," says Callen, "but the truth is that most gay men with AIDS know exactly why they have AIDS, but they won't talk about it."

Who can blame them? Why would they want to fuel the fire of homophobes who want them tattooed and quarantined, huffing that they have "brought the disease on themselves." Morality has nothing to do with science. Mike Callen has a good analogy. "Like the smoker who smokes two packs a day and ends up with lung cancer at the age of fifty, I believe that promiscuous gay men must bear some responsibility for developing AIDS. But no one bursts into the smoker's room and screams: You've gotten what you deserved; we're not going to treat you. No more money for cancer research because you've brought it on yourself!"

Dr. Sonnabend theorizes that at least two stages lead to AIDS, the first stemming from the accumulation of infectious assaults on the body. Repeated infection with CMV [cytomegala virus], and reactivation of EBV [Epstein-Barr virus], he says, causes immune suppression, flu-like symptoms and respiratory disease, playing an important role in this first stage. And multiple exposures to semen

can, itself, be immunosuppressive because semen, like blood, carries tissue that is perceived as foreign when it comes in contact with another immune system. "Exposure to multiple foreign semens leads to the appearance of antibodies reactive with an individual's T-lymphocytes," Sonnabend explains. The second stage is the complete breakdown of the immune system—or AIDS.

"I was seeing the same men several times a year," says Sonnabend, "and it became clear to me that it was absolutely impossible to avoid disease living the way they were living."

When doctors first noticed this puzzling syndrome in the early Eighties, they called it GRID, or Gay Related Immunodeficiency, since it was seen, at first, exclusively in gay men. For the first few years, researchers struggled to find a common denominator—elements of a gay lifestyle, perhaps—that could explain the sudden breakdown of the immune system that left victims vulnerable to the opportunistic infections and cancers. CDC officials James Curran and Harold Jaffe were two of the first medical detectives on the case, planting themselves at the core of gay culture in search of clues.

The CDC launched an all out investigation, probing gay men about their habits. When all the data had been analyzed, the strongest clues were the use of "poppers," an orgasm-enhancing drug that nearly 100% of the sick men had used, and the two viruses Sonnabend points to: CMV and EBV. All of the sick men had antibodies to CMV and 30% reported having had EBV, which was four times the rate of the healthy men studied.

These crucial explorations of the different co-factors that could be related to AIDS were aborted in 1984, when HIV, the virus discovered first in France and then in the U.S. by Dr. Robert Gallo of the National Cancer Institute, was thought to be the cause of AIDS. The synergism of an aggressive and highly motivated scientist, Gallo, with a virus that could, and did, bring him world fame, a medical establishment desperate for a "quick fix" solution, and a surprisingly unscrutinizing press, all helped create the current dogma that a single agent, HIV, causes AIDS. Investigations of other possible causes were abandoned, and government money and effort concentrated on HIV research exclusively. "If you get run over by a truck, you don't need co-factors," Gallo assured them.

"It's absolutely incomprehensible that this fraud was carried out in full public view," says Sonnabend. "This whole HIV thing came like a monkey wrench in the machinery. It stopped everything and it's done everybody a great disservice."

"Drug abuse and homosexuality have existed for many, many years," argues CDC official Peter Drotman. "People who dispute that HIV is a necessary cause of AIDS are just out of touch. Being gay is certainly not immunosuppressive. Maybe certain cancer drugs are."

What about street drugs, poppers, cocaine, heroin, Quaaludes...? "Well, they're not good for your health," says Drotman, "but they're certainly not immunosuppressive."

The few studies that have been done on the connection between drug use and the development of AIDS have shown that most gay men with AIDS had a history of drug use. Poppers, the most popular and the most dangerous, became a rudiment of gay sex culture in the early Seventies. They are a liquid mixture of butyl nitrite and other toxic chemicals, and are used, almost exclusively by gay men, to enhance and prolong the sensation of orgasm. Packaged in small bottles labeled "Rush," "Ram," "Lockerroom," etc. and mysteriously marketed as "room odorizers," the drug has been a vi-

tal sexual crutch for many gay men for years. "In the Sixties, poppers were almost exclusively an S&M drug," says John Lauritsen, co-author of the book "Death Rush: Poppers and AIDS," "but then in the Seventies they spread out and became a disco drug. By 1974, the poppers craze was in full swing and by 1977, poppers were in every corner of gay life. It went beyond sex. Some people would hold them under their noses and dance around the disco floor with them. Others would just snort them all day long. I've heard so many grisly stories. There are people with AIDS who have used poppers on their death beds—literally."

In a study comparing two groups of gay men who were antibody positive to HIV, where one group was clinically sick with AIDS and one was not, usage of poppers proved to be one of the distinguishing factors. Although the CDC finally concluded that there was no connection between poppers and immunosuppression, the book points to at least five different studies proving that exposure to amyl nitrite caused immunological deficiency in mice. In one of these studies, the mice suffered severe lung damage, weight loss, and reversed T-cell ratios, which some doctors claim to be the primary immunological defect in AIDS patients.

And why haven't our regulatory agencies banned this product, which can be bought like chewing gum at some newsstands and headshops? According to Lauritsen, poppers are the biggest money makers in the gay business world, grossing \$50 million in 1978, and possibly twice that by now.

Supposedly, every drug in the U.S. has to go through massive testing before it can be sold legally. But the poppers manufacturers found a loophole, calling their product a "room odorizer," and causing our government regulatory agencies to allow that it be marketed freely. "They are not drugs. They do not meet the description of drugs," says one FDA official. "They are room deodorizers and they have been around much longer than AIDS has. You can't label something a drug and ban it just because somebody's using it as an illicit product. It's not under our jurisdiction."

"We're certainly aware of how they're being used," says Chuck Jacobsen of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, "but our commissioner concluded that there was nothing in our Consumer Product Safety laws that could deal with it, so we dropped the issue about three or four years ago. The label says 'eye irritant,' and 'not to be inhaled,' but of course we know that this is not going to be an effective deterrent. It's really a sociological problem."

According to Lauritsen and Wilson, the link between poppers and AIDS was brought to the attention of *The Advocate*, the world's leading gay magazine, by one of the doctors involved in the mice studies. Dr. Sue Watson wrote a letter to the editor of *The Advocate* stating that "... persons using nitrite inhalants may be at risk for development of AIDS..." *The Advocate* told her that they were "not interested" and it was later discovered that the poppers industry was *The Advocate's* largest advertiser.

In 1983, Joseph Miller, president of Great Lakes Products, Inc., a major poppers manufacturer, wrote a letter to *The Advocate* claiming that CDC studies had ruled out any connection between AIDS and poppers. Miller wrote: "As the largest advertiser in the Gay press, we intend to use the extensive space we purchase each month as the vehicle for sending a message of good health and wellness through nutrition and exercise to the North American Gay communities."

*The Advocate* then ran full-page ads for the



Great Lakes brands of poppers, calling the series "Blueprint for Health."

Six months later, Dr. James Curran of the CDC sent an angry letter to the poppers manufacturer and *The Advocate* saying: "... Your press release and advertisements in *The Advocate* are misleading and misrepresent the CDC findings and their implications... while it is unlikely that nitrites will be implicated as the primary cause of AIDS, their role as a co-factor in some of the illnesses found in this syndrome has not been ruled out. I must insist that you discontinue the misuse and misinterpretation of CDC findings."

Last year, the poppers industry, led by Joseph Miller, launched a campaign to prevent poppers from being banned. Today, poppers are banned in only three states: Massachusetts, Wisconsin, and, as of June 1985, New York. And the leading gay media, including *The Advocate*, have finally stopped advertising them. "We saw so many reports on poppers and AIDS that we finally made the decision, last June, to stop advertising all inhalants," says Rafael Llanes, a sales representative from *The Advocate*.

"We do have some statistical association between the heavy use of poppers and the outcome of Kapo-



**"I think the medical establishment has done a tremendous disservice by shifting the focus from environmental factors to this one virus."**

si's Sarcoma," says CDC official Peter Drottman, "but there's no clear cut evidence. What we do have clear cut evidence for is that HIV causes AIDS, and I think it would be irresponsible of us not to focus our attention on that."

"What's really dangerous about poppers is that they deaden the sense of pain involved in anal intercourse," says Lauritsen. "Pain is the body's natural warning. They also superincrease the absorbency of the rectum which would greatly increase the action of any pathogenic organisms that were there." Lauritsen notes that poppers use among gays has dropped recently, as has the incidence of Kaposi's Sarcoma, a skin cancer that is a common sign of AIDS among gay men. "AIDS appears to be a lifestyle condition," says Lauritsen. "The gay lifestyle that is characteristic of the Mineshaft and the gay discos is incredibly unhealthy and has no parallels in the straight world. There are a lot of straight people who use drugs, of course, but not in the intense, almost obligatory way that gay people did."

How does this "multifactorialist" theory explain the other "risk groups" for AIDS like IV drug users, hemophiliacs, blood transfusion recipients?

IV drug abusers are exposed to many of the above mentioned immunosuppressants—chemicals, infectious diseases, malnutrition, and exchange of blood through needles. In New York City, which holds 28% of the nation's cases, AIDS has killed more IV drug users than it has homosexual men. As for hemophiliacs, who constitute 1% of the nation's cases, Sonnabend points to several studies published in 1983, suggesting that a blood clotting agent known as Factor VIII, required by hemophiliacs, suppresses the immune system. And blood transfusions in general are said to be extremely taxing on the immune system, which gets bombarded by foreign agents in the blood. Most people who receive blood transfusions, with the exception of accident victims, are cancer patients, who may be immunosuppressed through chemotherapy, and heart surgery patients who have taken a lot of antibiotics. Many researchers theorize that overuse of antibiotics, especially cortisone and tetracycline can suppress the immune system, and decrease resistance to later infections.

One of the greatest AIDS enigmas is Africa, where hundreds of thousands of men and women are dying of a disease that is considered to be the same as AIDS in the U.S., although many scientists are beginning to doubt that it is. Just as in the U.S., Dr. Sonnabend believes that dirty needles, malnutrition, and poverty are key contributing factors to AIDS in Africa. In the U.S., AIDS is most rampant among the underprivileged (39% of all U.S. cases are black and Hispanics who are often forced to live in very unhealthy environments, and suffer the same malnutrition and poor hygiene that some impoverished African people do).

Studies have shown that the immune system changes that occur in AIDS/ARC patients are identical to the changes that occur in malnourished

people in the third world. The standard American diet consists largely of sugar, fat, and processed foods, and consequently, millions of Americans, despite their affluence, are malnourished with weak immune systems. "The most important changes that an ill person must make are in the area of nutrition. The relationship of nutrition to the immune system is unquestioned," says Dr. Laurence Badgley, in his book "Healing AIDS Naturally," stressing that people should eat unprocessed foods, and limit their intake of meat, fat, sugar, caffeine, and carbohydrates.

Toxic chemicals, radiation and other environmental factors have long been proven immunosuppressors, causing leukemia, lymphoma and various immune deficiency syndromes in the last few decades. It was after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, for example, that the worst leukemia epidemic in history erupted. Leukemia is supposedly caused by the retrovirus HTLV-1, the first strain of the HIV ("AIDS virus") family. Typically, no federal investigation of the possible links between leukemia, AIDS, and environmental causes is planned.

According to a University of California researcher, almost 90% of cancers are caused by chemicals in the environment. In 1979, flouride was shown to cause damage in human white blood cells, which are necessary to a healthy immune system. CDC studies have shown that cities where the water is fluoridated have three times as many AIDS cases as cities where the water is unfluoridated. For example:

Newark, New Jersey (not fluoridated) 178.5 cases (per million pop.)

New York, New York (fluoridated) 488.7 cases

Los Angeles, CA (not fluoridated) 155.3 cases

San Francisco, CA (fluoridated) 467.3 cases

Coincidence?

The idea that AIDS fell, plague-like, from the sky—an invisible, thoroughly perplexing and deadly microbe called HIV that kills randomly and mercilessly, is illogical, but convenient. It's convenient for the medical establishment because the AIDS case cracks wide open if environmentally related factors are involved. A single cause means a single cure and a single vaccine, neither of which have materialized. The financial benefits would be staggering if one were to materialize. AZT, the only drug currently available to AIDS patients, costs \$10,000 per patient per year. Paradoxically, this drug is itself a highly toxic immunosuppressant, and can boast no long-term survivors.

Dr. Sonnabend feels that his approach is anything but radical. "It's derived from a traditional medical training," he says. "Common sense says that you have to place a person in his total environment in order to determine the causes of disease."

His approach is, however, counterconventional, so much so that it cost him his funding and the editorship of "AIDS Research," the first journal aimed solely at AIDS research. In 1986, Sonnabend lost his job, without explanation, to Dani Bolognesi, of Duke University, who worked closely with Gallo on HIV. The journal is now renamed "AIDS Research and Human Retroviruses," and the editorial board holds only HIV advocates from the National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control, and even Burrough-Wellcome, the company that owns AZT.

Has he, in all of the years treating AIDS, seen or heard of a person with a healthy immune system who was exposed to HIV, fell ill, and died? "No," he sighs, "I don't think there is such a patient. I'd love to be proven wrong though; if you hear of such a case, please let me know."

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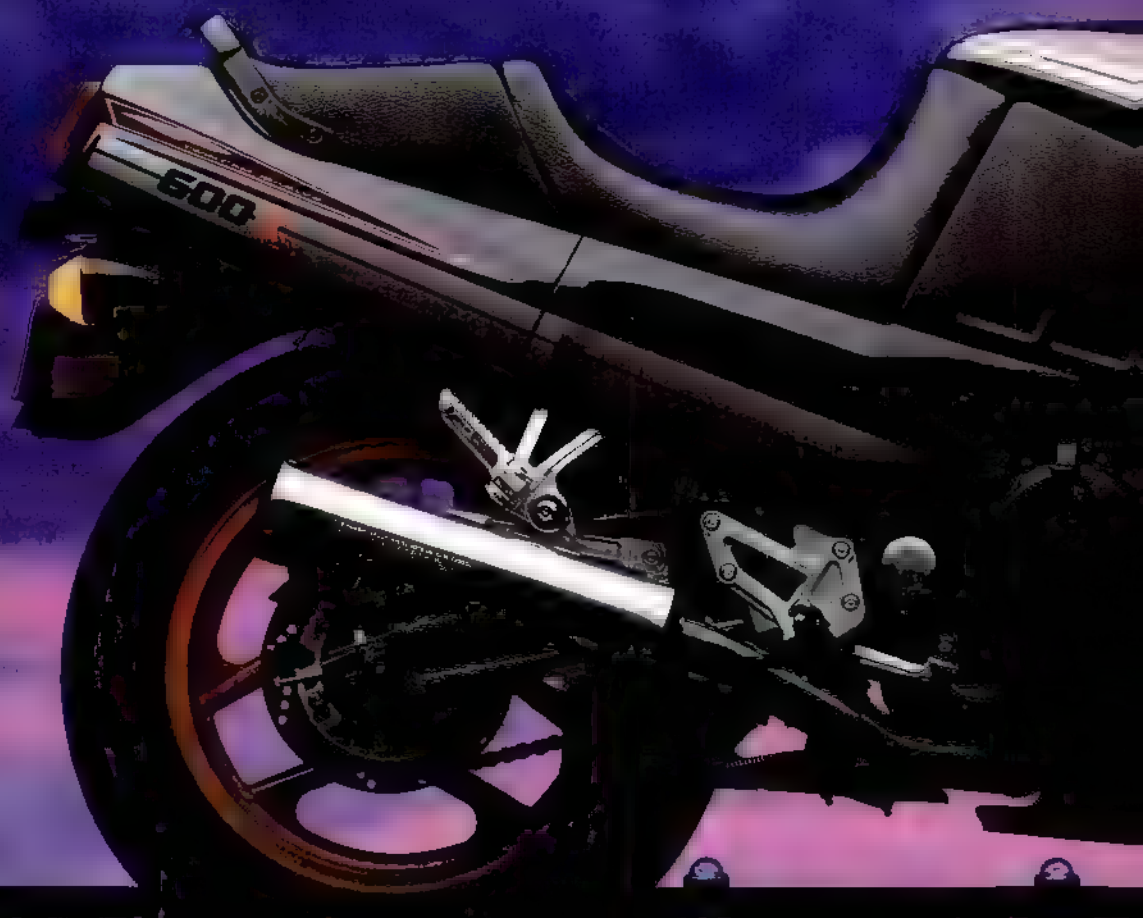
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# ANTIHERO

When you realize televangelists are having more sex than you, you know that the Eighties suck. The only solution is to find a place where the illusion of fun still exists—and Legs McNeil found Miami.

Photography by  
Scott Wippermann

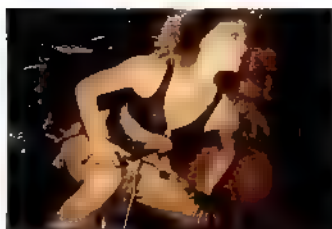
Column by Legs McNeil

There was something about this New Age of Greed, Hysteria, and Extinction that was really starting to get to me. It wasn't just that having sex nowadays might prove fatal, although that was a big part of it. But it also seemed that every other pleasure known to men and women held the potential for disaster. Drugs and alcohol now trapped you in a life of misery where just a few years ago they supposedly opened the doors of perception. Rock 'n' roll was still fun, but the weighted heels of the stage jumpers' combat boots were making it a real bitch to enjoy live shows. Six years of this roller derby bullshit hadn't made it any more interesting, just more institutionalized. Life no longer seemed a celebration. A bunker mentality had set in. Going out meant exposing yourself to AIDS, certain crack addiction, and the waiting embrace of SATAN!

Even when I stayed home and grew roots lying on the couch in front of the TV, eventually I'd nod off and around four in the morning Jimmy Swaggart or some other hysterical, bellowing, pious asshole would subliminally feed me nightmares of Holocaust and Hell. I'd awake in a cold sweat thinking I was doomed to a life of eternal damnation and then realize it wasn't a dream. "Yes kids the party is over and now it's time to pay the piper!!! For only a small donation to me I can help Jeeezzzzsssss cleanse that filthy soul of yours and wash away the iniquities!!! I am the Lysol of the Lord, Hallelujah!!!"

What was even worse than these late night grifters of God, was the fact that I was starting to believe them.

It was around this time, this New Season Death, that I had the unfortunate experience of being an eyewitness



ness to a murder. I was in a bar two blocks from my house, late at night, having a beer with a friend and complaining about SPIN. There were four other people in the joint, all the way in the back shooting a game of pool. I was whining away about how shitty life had become when a guy walked in, scurried directly to the back of the bar, put a gun to the back of one of the pool players' heads and pulled the trigger twice. The gun didn't go off and the intended victim turned around and immediately began fighting for his life, trying to keep the gunman from pulling the trigger again. The two men fought their way back down the bar and were three barstools away. Then the gunman finally lifted up what looked like a toy pistol to the other guy's chest and pulled the trigger twice at point blank range. This time the gun went off both times. A millisecond later I was on the floor screaming silent prayers to whomever: Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, Moses, anybody who'd listen, asking that when I got it, the bullet would miss my balls and hit me in the ass. Even in prayer I was committing sacrilege.

The gunman split after he finally stopped trying to push his way out the door and pulled it open. Thank God he could at least figure that out or we'd all still be there lying on the floor.

Then the guy who'd just been shot did the same thing with the door, literally on his last legs, trying to chase his killer down, as if when he caught up with the guy he could somehow change the outcome of what had just happened. Instead, he fell in the doorway when he finally got it opened. His last act was to stop trying to push it. He pulled the door open and fell into the void.

The bartender jumped over the bar with a baseball bat in hand, and ran into the street looking for revenge. I crawled over to the wounded guy on all fours, where the girl he came with was already kneeling over him, and very carefully lifted up his T-shirt to see the extent of the damage. I stopped after the first bullet hole. The wound was just below the heart, and there was no blood pouring out, which I took to mean that his heart was in pretty bad shape; otherwise there would have been jets of the red stuff all over the place. He was still breathing when I ran into the street looking for a cop or a cab or anybody to get him to the emergency room at St. Luke's a few blocks up the street. There wasn't even a street sweeper on Amsterdam Avenue. When I ran back into the doorway, he had stopped breathing. I tilted his head back, pinched his nostrils and gave him mouth-to-mouth.



"Oh so that's what killed him!" all my funny friends have said, so don't bother. It's been done.

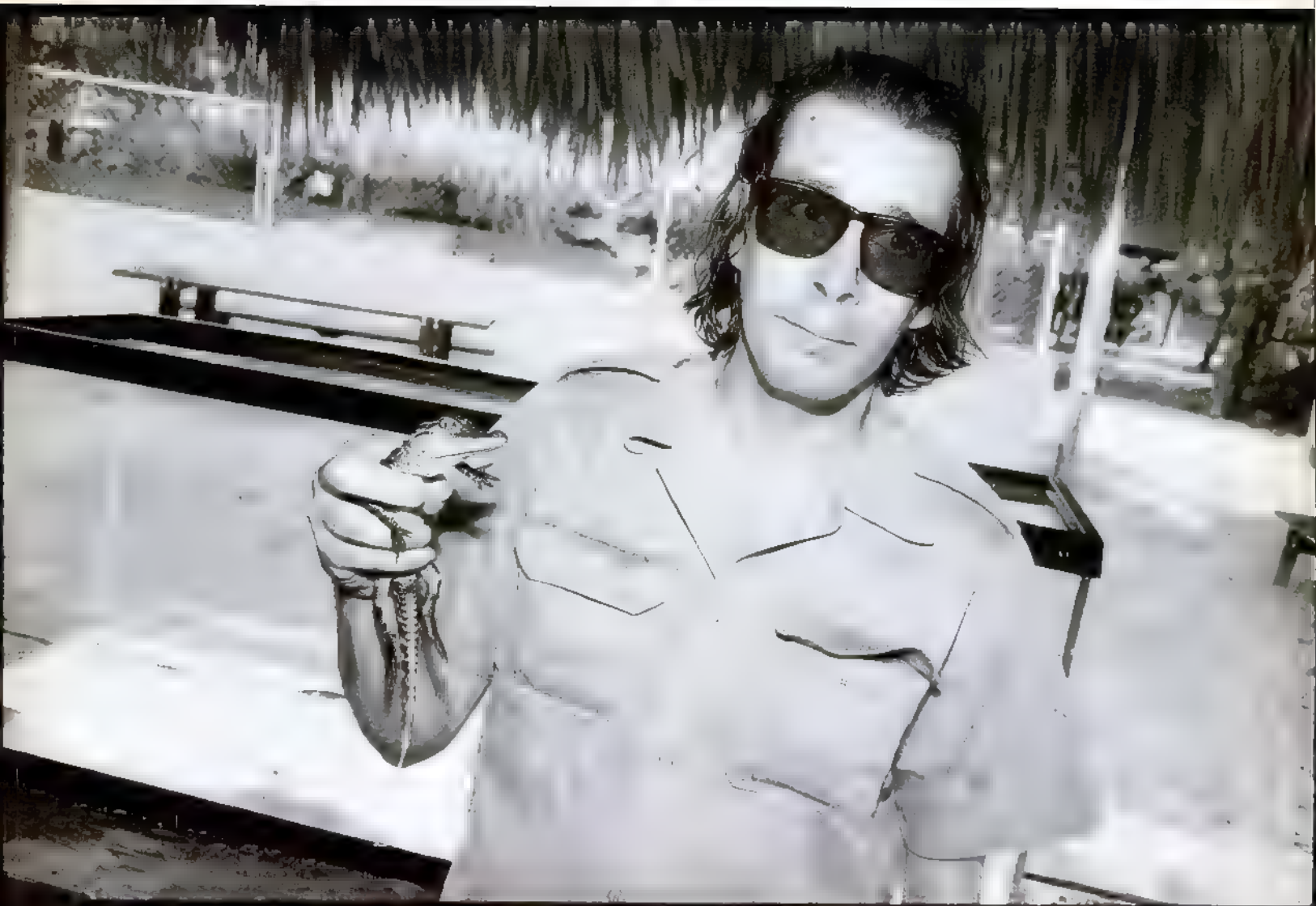
The cops arrived three or four excruciatingly long minutes later, threw him in the back of a squad car like a sack of potatoes and rushed him off to the emergency room. He died on the table the next afternoon.

The next couple of weeks were a nightmare of cops. Mostly I remember the tens of thousands of mug shots of the most gruesome motherfuckers you ever saw. There were lots of terrifying minutes behind the two-way mirror, where the two-way stuff had long ago peeled off and I realized the hulking psychopath standing two feet away could see me as well as I could see him, while lady cops watched *The Terminator* on cable behind me, filling the tiny room with the soundtrack of people begging for mercy before Arnold Schwarzhogger blew them away. This was a fucking bummer.

But all along, throughout the whole terrifying ordeal, there was a bizarre elation, a weird kind of joy that lay right underneath the horror. When I walked into that bar that night I had been having a shitty day. But nothing compared to the guy who had been murdered. Getting out of there alive made everything else inconsequential. What was even weirder was instead of having some religious experience in reaction to the murder, I felt kind of free of the subliminal fear and loathing of God's Chosen Used Car Salesmen of the Airwaves. The fantastic rush of surviving had turned me into a death junkie. I wanted more. It wasn't about dying actually, but the thrill of surviving it.

What I was feeling reminded me of the Graham Greene short story, "The





Revolver in the Corner Cupboard." It is the tale of a young man who discovers his brother's gun and eventually begins playing Russian roulette with it. Unlike the young man in Greene's story, I didn't possess balls large enough to go pulling any triggers for myself. What I wanted was a lazy man's war. Somewhere where it was comfy while they were shooting at me. New York is anything but comfy. A war zone is too depressing. There

had to be someplace left where I could find the creature comforts along with the action. The place where, at least, the illusion of sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll still existed.

It was a godsend that Karen called that week. Karen is an old girlfriend who had been a free spirit of a punkette during the CBGB's days and wasn't opposed to having sex in the back of Checker Cabs in between Heartbreakers and Ramones sets, then became a semi-respectable gallery owner on the Lower East Side, gave her dream its best shot, but lost it all when inflated Yuppie real estate investments made life in the Big Apple unrentable. So she said, "Fuck this shit!" And moved to Miami. These days she had taken to calling me every month and teasing me with her randy exploits in Miami, the New-Found City of Her Dreams.

The first time she called me, Karen was a self-proclaimed yacht slut in the Coconut Grove. The second time, she was having a mad, passionate affair with one of Mario Andretti's chief mechanics who was down there for the Miami Grand Prix. The third time she called she was doing promo parties for Burdine's, a huge exclusive department store owned by the same people that brought you Bloomingdale's. Her days were spent flying over South Florida in advertising-banner planes, and her nights at catered affairs with the "Model of the Month" they had flown down to do in-store promotions. Then all that fell through and Karen had a new boyfriend, an artist this time, who was doing nude life-size sculptures of her, while she kept them both in vodka doing public relations for one of the hotels in the South Miami Beach Art Deco Hotel district.

*The author among his people.*

It was hard to keep up with her, but every phone call was an adventure, every story a cheap tawdry paperback novel just waiting to be written. What made me even more envious than her wild tales of sex and weirdness, was the fact that she had the guts to leave New York and start life anew without losing the edge.

When she called me a couple of weeks after my witnessing the hit and I told her about it, her only response was, "Gee, sounds like you'd fit right in down here!"

Twenty minutes later she called back with the name of a P.R. firm where I was to pick up my airline tickets, the name of the hotel that was putting me up, and what time she'd be waiting to collect me at Miami International Airport. After hanging up the



second time, I was thinking, "Why not? This is the place where the cocaine wars got so bad during the early Eighties, the city morgue was so busy they had to rent refrigerator trucks to handle all the dead bodies. It sounded like the perfect place. Sun and surf during the day, dodging bullets at night. Yea, this was the place to go. Miami, yeah, Miami."

"I WANT TO GO TO CLUB NU! I WANT TO GO TO CLUB NU!" Karen demanded after she picked up Scott the Photographer and me and recited our whole two-week agenda to us on the way from the airport to the Big, Free Hotel Penthouse. Dressed in a green and black neo preem body glove/zip-up bikini and nothing else but her long black hair gracing her beautifully tanned body, Karen looked especially ravishing, but her whining was already getting to me. We should have gotten rid of some old baggage then and there, but she had just broken up with another boyfriend and the nervous strain of the ordeal had left Karen particularly firm and slim and... and I should have known that relationships with old girlfriends are better left kept over the phone lines.

That first fight was over where to go that night. I opted for the emergency room at Jackson Memorial Hospital, because a new Florida gun law had just gone into effect which insured every state resident that wasn't blind and

didn't have a criminal record the right to shoot their way to happiness. I thought it would be a great way to spend the evening: waiting for the bars to close so all the drunken trigger-happy knuckleheads would mingle out on the street, and before long begin using one another for target practice. Of course we'd be waiting at the doors of the trauma center and watch as the bloodied gunshot victims were wheeled into surgery. ■ would be ■ great photo opportunity for Scott. But Karen wouldn't go for it.

"I WANT TO GO TO CLUB NU!" she insisted, and after watching her walk around in that body glove by the pool we were ready to promise her anything.

"Just don't lose me!" I screamed at her and Scott the Photographer as they were engulfed by the crowd of tuxedoed men and half-naked women throbbing in one writhing mass just inside the door of the club. It was amazing; Club Nu was just like that kids toy "Slime with Worms." Everyone seemed to be physically connected to everyone else, and they were all vibrating like lumps of fruit in the big Jell-O mold. The guys were looking especially smart in their tuxedos, and the penguin suits lent a certain anonymity to the proceedings. Maybe it was so they'd all appear uniformly rich, instead of just another asshole in a Hawaiian shirt.

"Jeez, can't your friends even dress?" one of the guys at the door re-

marked to Karen just before she and Scott were swallowed up. It wasn't the most welcoming crack I'd ever heard and it made me just a little bit paranoid. It didn't help as I tried to push my way through the crowd; the tuxedoed men suddenly lost their smiles as I approached and turned into well-dressed pit bulls. All of them looking like they were about to jump for my throat because I was obviously scum come to corrupt their territory. The women, on the other hand, were all looking loose in comparison to the uptight, dog pack stance of the guys. Real loose. The waitresses were decked out in ripped black fishnet stockings, garter belts, black panties, stiletto heels and black lacey push-up Madonna bras, and because the place was so packed, they had abandoned their stations and took to dancing on top of the bars. Well, not really dancing, more like humping imaginary partners. Not to be outdone by the waitresses, the other women on the prowl let their clothes dangle off their bodies revealing breasts of all shapes and sizes. Struggling through this crowd to get a drink at the bar, I finally figured out Miami's main attraction.

"Oops, excuse me... Whoa, gotta watch those mammaries... Holy moly, do you mind moving those off the bar so I can squeeze in here?"

Whoever thought foreplay would come to just strolling up to the bar? By the time the beer came I felt I'd been intimate with six women.

"Hey, get that elbow outta my way!

You're blocking the view!"

It was Scott the Photographer moving in for a shot of ■ beautiful girl named Annie, from the band the Pop Tarts. She was flailing away on the dance floor barechested and it was one hell of a hypnotic sight.

"Are ya gonna take the picture or what!" I screamed at him as he stood there playing with his giant lense. Scott is a 22-year-old student/free-lance photographer I had brought along to run interference in case anyone expected me to do any real work on this gig. I thought I'd let him run around and document the "Miami Experience" while I held out by the pool getting reacquainted with Karen. But he took the job so fucking seriously, I wanted to grab his American Express Card away from him and send him home to his new wife in New Jersey.

"Karen's looking for you," Scott screamed after taking two rolls of close-ups of Annie's areolas.

"Where is she?"

"The back room."

"Where's that?"

But Scott had already spotted another scene-maker falling out of her evening gown and went to fondle her with his cameras. Like most of your serious metropolitan nightclubs, Club Nu has the standard labyrinths of black holes leading off the main dance floor in a maze that goes nowhere. Just private little alcoves where the rich and trendy hide out from the writhing masses and catch their breath while ingesting whatever gets them through the night. There's other large rooms you can wander through, giving the feeling you're going from party to party, but tonight the place is so crowded the club has become one giant subway station mobbed during rush hour.

"C'mere, I want you to meet my friends," Karen says as she pulls me over to a table where a bunch of Miami Beach's leading citizens are sipping champagne and ignoring the chaos pouring over them from every-



where. "And by the way, where have you been?"

"I got lost for an hour trying to find you, I couldn't find anything but jiggling, bouncing, quivering mounds of..."

"The owners of the club are looking for you."

"What the hell are you talking about?" I asked her, knowing I hadn't done anything to get 86'd from the



joint.

"I just thought you should know the owners are looking for you so you can interview the Gibbs."

"Gibbs. What Gibbs?"

"Come on you know: AH, AH, AH, STAY'EN ALIVE, STAY'EN ALIVE! AH, AH, AH, STAY'EN ALIVE, STAY'EN ALIVE!...What do you think everyone is doing here tonight?"

Oh no! It dawned on me that this was a party celebrating everything goldchained and cokespooned about America. A nostalgic festival of Seventies mediocrity! Sure, I was having trouble with the Eighties, but this sure wasn't the solution. Going backwards never is. And right away I knew I had to get out of there. I excused myself and tried to run for the nearest exit, or rather pushed and groped along with the crowd until I finally grew weaker by being sucked around and around in the throng's undertow. Just as I was about to go under for the last time, I grabbed hold of the men's room door and threw myself in.

Safely locked inside the toilet stall, I tried to catch my breath and decide whether to stay and try to get lucky, all the while eluding the management, or just split. Then something curious happened. Inside the men's room, I heard someone talking about me.

"So where's that guy from SPIN?"

"I dunno, probably at the bar."

I wanted to yell, "HERE I AM! HERE I AM!" But instead I waited to see whose side they were on.

"If ya see 'um, tell 'um everything's set up so he can talk to the boys."

"Sure."

Whoa, that was a close one. There was nothing left to do but escape. I ran pushing through the chaos, finally found the front door, and grabbed a cab on the street.

"Edison Hotel."

"Where's that?"

"I dunno, just drive, we have to get out of here, it's very important. Some people are after me."

"Who?"

"The Bee Gees."

Everyone here is a refugee. Sitting outside the Tropics Bar below the Edison Hotel you kind of get the feeling you're in the opening scene of *Casablanca*. You know, the one with all those displaced persons from Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa hanging out in the bars, cafes, and bazaars, trying to get up enough cash to bribe their way onto the midnight plane to Lisbon. Yea, they're all here, plus Argentinians, Englishmen, Japanese, Bolivians, Venezuelans, Australians, Jamaicans; in fact everyone seems to be represented.

Only this place ain't black-and-white like the movie, but lush with startling pinks, aquas, and sunkissed oranges. And since this is the Eighties, everyone already has the cash—the scene here is just about hustling for more. Everywhere on the Beach,

good looking people (we're talking chic, trendy, sexy looking people who all look like they just stepped out of an *Obsession* ad) wander up and down Ocean Drive or sit in their special bars, at their special tables underneath the umbrellas making the scene. On the surface it all looks kind of casual and relaxed, but as the sun sinks over the Edison Hotel a sense of urgency helps drown out the daylight. Everyone wants to be on the party plane to Lisbon. Or wherever.

The notoriety of television's "Miami Vice" has given the Beach a kind of Rick's Cafe feel to it. Or rather "Miami Vice" and the real drug dealers. Only instead of Rick's there's Club Nu and instead of Sydney Greenstreet's Blue Parrot there is the China Club and Ron Wood's new club, Woody's. This is where everybody in this International City of People on the Run hangs out while waiting for their Letters of Transit.

"So ya wanna fuck or what?"

It wasn't your ideal beach setting. Hurricane surf and a radical undertow threatened to suck you under with

**I realized that staying in Miami meant waking with the DTs forever.**

each advancing set of crashing waves. The beach was a sandstorm that left permanent pockmarks on your face if you turned towards the 40-mile-an-hour winds. But Scott the Photographer told me it was worth checking out. "Man, you got to see it, there's about ten girls out there frolicking in the surf and..."

He was right. When I finally made it across the half mile of beachfront to the water, I sat with the wind at my back and watched as beautiful women had their skimpy bathing suits rearranged from their tits and asses to their elbows and ankles. The women all hung onto a buoyed rope that divided the swimming area from the jet ski area, all indulging in an orgy of no tomorrow. Rich girls lost in the spray of annihilation. Two hurricanes, one in 1926 and another in 1935, had wiped out Miami Beach before and now another was moving up the Keys headed straight for us. A bunker mentality had set in on the rest of the city, but at the Beach everyone was gearing up for Hurricane Parties and other festive events to celebrate the end times. And as I sat there wondering what it all meant, a very pretty young girl pulled herself out of the surf and came scurrying up the sand looking for a towel. I obliged her and she joined me under my black leather jacket. We both just

stared out at the boiling froth and that's when she asked me.

"Sure, but why don't we go back to my room..."

"No, here." She cut me off and then took my hand and led me to where the sand was smooth from the beach break.

It was an apocalyptic fuck. Not because Hurricane Floyd had turned from a tropical storm into a threat to Miami, but because with each eclipse of wave, her ass fell deeper into the eroding sand. And I fell into her. It felt like digging your own grave and liking it. The waves that washed over us were warm, the temperature of the water somewhere around 80 degrees, and with the tide advancing a few inches with every set, it was like as soon as you climaxed, the big one would roll over you and drag you down forever. For the first time that I can remember, I wasn't afraid of falling into the void.

When we finished, she jumped up and returned to the water. I walked back across the beach, trying to light a cigarette in the 40-mile-an-hour wind, with my wet sneakers farting with every step. Sitting alone on the front porch of the Tropics bar I watched as the girls finally exhausted themselves in the water, ran across the beach, climbed into their Mercedes and BMWs and drove off to look for the next party.

And there always is another party. Because this place is permanent Vacationville and new enthusiasts arrive every day, providing reinforcements for those ravaged, burnt-out bodies lost in action. The War on Boredom demands eternal vigilance and is in constant need of new volunteers to man the front lines. Karen had remedied her potential of becoming a wasted burn-out and getting sent back North with a note from the doctor, by alternating working a full-time job and getting laid off. She planned her off times to coincide with the social events of the season, when she usually picked up a new boyfriend. Karen is in her mid-20's, so her body can still afford the hangovers. But for the older hipsters, a quiet desperation in their eyes betrayed any cool demeanor. If they didn't find their pot of gold soon, it would be too late.

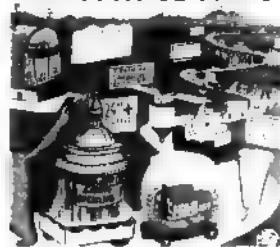
You could see it at Monte Trainer's, an open air booze-and-broad joint at the foot of the Coconut Grove marina, where women with serious money on the brain gather to the overamplified beat of homogenized reggae while waiting for one of the yacht studs (guys employed to watch over big boats in exchange for room and board) to amble down the floating dock and snuggle up tight and whisper those magic words of "Coke and Boat."

Everything here is sleeker, slicker, and more expensive. The cars look like the jet fighters of the highway. The

*Continued on page 80*

# BAR NONE RECORDS

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# PLAYING THE GAME

Echo and the Bunnymen debate the politics of selling out.

**W**ill Sergeant is fuming. "They said it sounds great on the radio. What are they talking about? Who cares about the radio? It's our record. Now it's just something to be ashamed of."

The source of the guitarist's anger is the dance remix of "Bedhugs and Ballyhoo," the second American single off Echo and the Bunnymen's self-titled fifth album. In the interests of airplay and continued appeal in the burgeoning "rock dance" market, the group's West Coast management, appointed just a year ago, commissioned the customary 12" remix and the group is far from happy with the results. Backstage in Philadelphia, a local rock DJ tells the band that he is only playing the song's original incarnation—a B-side from two years ago—and is immediately thanked and shown to the drinks trolley.

Echo and the Bunnymen's refusal to play by the preordained rules is nothing new. At their first gig in their Liverpool hometown almost ten years ago, the then trio of Sergeant, singer Ian (Mac) McCulloch, and bass player Les Pattinson, backed by a primitive drumbox, settled for playing a fifteen-minute, two-chord drone rather than rehearse a full set. After acquiring a drummer, the teenage Pete De Freitas, they quickly developed a collection of mature post-punk rock songs. A major record deal with Warner Brothers resulted in two seminal albums, *Crocodiles* and *Heaven Up Here*, prompting the NME's claim that "Echo and the Bunnymen have done for rock what Tamla/Motown did for dance music."

All this time the group kept themselves apart from other contenders by virtue of their uniforms of combat fatigues, their mystery events, eclectic films, and scenic album sleeves. Swept into commercial success with "The Cutter" single and the album, *Porcupine*, they headed off on a tour of obscure Scottish islands and unusual venues like London's Royal Albert Hall and Stratford's Royal Shakespeare Theatre. When critics began to consider them part of the brash rock revival, in cahoots with U2, Simple Minds, Big Country, and the Alarm, the band deliberately veered left of center, making the acoustic *Ocean Rain* album, backed by a full orchestra. And when their record company refused to finance the video they wanted, the band paid for it themselves.

By late 1984, they were fed up with each other and planned a year off, only to reconvene after six months to take a set of their favorite cover songs to tiny Scandinavian clubs. A compilation of singles, *Songs to Learn and Sing*, helped keep their name in vogue while they deliberated over their next album, with drummer Pete De Freitas leaving and rejoining

after a dangerous flirtation with insanity. Then, seemingly bored with their obstreperous reputation, and certainly frustrated at seeing so many British groups overtake them on American charts, the group opted for heavyweight management and a deliberately commercial album. In Britain, *Echo and the Bunnymen* fell quickly off the charts, and the group confined themselves to a less-than-sold-out week-long tour. In America, where the album was mixed, it is getting on to tripling any of their previous albums' sales, and has already produced one successful single in "Lips Like Sugar." Following the success of last summer's American tour with New Order, the group has returned for its second mammoth trek in six months. Almost all of the shows are sold out. The question is, has the band had to sell out as well?

"Getting reasonably big in America is a natural thing," says Will. "We've been pushing away at it for so long that it's happening automatically. It just takes longer because it's too big."

Will explains the Bunnymen's increasing success as having more to do with the group's live appeal than any business moves. For years, Sergeant, an aficionado of the Velvets, Television, and the Residents with his own self-taught, anti-musical style, affected a complete disregard for the group's commercial progress. But now he is visibly excited by what he sees as their organic growth in the States. Like his partners, he believes that any other Bunnymen album would be selling just as well if it had been the most recent. "It's just the fact that we've been doing it for so long, and we've come back here so often, that word has gone around that we're a great live band."

Les Pattinson, who shares Will's dislike of the business, agrees. "Two kids came up to me separately one night and said, 'It's great that you're not on MTV all the time. You get U2 and Simple Minds shoved down your neck 24 hours a day, but the good thing about you is my friend told me about you.' And they regard that as though they discovered us themselves."

And Ian McCulloch, the lanky short-sighted singer with the dark glasses and immaculately untidy haircut, feels that even their management is "seeing why people like us on this tour. And it's not because of the production on 'Blue Blue Ocean,'" a standard pop song on the new album that the singer confesses hating. "It's for the sound of 'Do It Clean,'" a classic rocker from *Crocodiles*.

He has a point. Echo and the Bunnymen live are, nine years down the road, as good as they have ever been. Returning to the camouflage-netting stage set they first went out on tour with, and drawing half the songs from their first two albums, (nei-

ther of which sold well in the States), the band is throwing out a challenge that the teenage audience responds to. There are few shouts for the Bunnymen's soundtrack songs, "Bring On the Dancing Horses" and "People Are Strange," neither of which is played, but rapturous receptions to the hook of "Rescue," the thrash of "Crocodiles," even the dour Northern English intensity of "All I Want." They meet their accusations of being Doors rip-offs head on by covering "Soul Kitchen," and remind us that they have had but one set of peers in Liverpool with a frequently shambolic finale of "Twist and Shout." Girls scream at Ian's sleazy sexual gestures and stage invasions are common. In short, it is a triumph.

"The next record is the most important that we've ever done," says Will. "We always go on about the fact that we're good live, but by the time it gets to record it's never as good."

"We want to record it like live," says Les. "I think we've got the ability and the experience of playing live onstage to do that."

"Whether it's as powerful as the live thing, the next album will still be a million times better than the last one," says Ian. "Although I'm worried about people saying, 'It's gonna be good if you can capture it live'—that can endanger things like 'The Killing Moon.' If you've got something that sounds like a bit of a ballad and you put electric stuff on it and a big drum kit, you've blown it."

For the Bunnymen's next album to be as good as they are capable of, they have to rectify their long-standing problems with producers. The band has rarely hit it off with an extra figure in the studio, and prefer to produce themselves, despite record company objections. The fact that U2 has only ever had two producers must say something for their track record.

"It's funny," observes Ian. "Before U2 used Eno, Will was always saying, 'Why don't we get Eno to produce?' I thought it was really shrewd of them. U2 made a real effort not to sound like some Irish pub band, which I thought they always sounded like. Whether it was 'Sunday Bloody Sunday' or 'I Will Follow,' I always saw them as being in The Marquee [the London CBGB's]. Eno's not competing with some house engineer in the Record Plant or whatever—there's all this competition going on, trying to be the next Bob Clearmountain, and that's why everything sounds so horrible."

"In the past I've always thought Bowie would be brilliant for us because I don't think we have just a rock sound. There was something about the Ziggy

Ian (Mac) McCulloch thinking about his favorite subject—himself.

Article by Tony Fletcher

Photography by Anton Corbijn







*Stardust* sound that made it out of space, not just dead-end rock."

But the Bunnymen are also in urgent need of fresh songs. With a past reputation for airing new tunes on stage, the current live show is sadly reliant on old material. With an almost unbeatable reputation for laziness, it is difficult to believe Ian when he says that "If we haven't made this next record by September, I don't think we'll do it." It might be easier to be persuaded by Will's conviction. "We're determined this time. There's gotta be no fucking around, we've got to sort it out."

He's right. Echo and the Bunnymen wouldn't be the first act to grow in stature, maintain a superb live reputation, and even sell more records, all without ever equaling the excitement and inspiration of their early material. It happened to the Who, the Kinks, the Stones—Christ, even David Bowie plays stadiums these days without a hope in higher hell of maintaining the influence he held back in the early Seventies. The challenge is there.

"I always wanted, not to be a pop star, but to have that thing that maybe a lot of people can't handle." Ian is talking about his favorite subject—himself. It's five o'clock in the afternoon, the curtains are still drawn, and the star is still in bed. He's missing a soundcheck under the guise of doing an interview, which won't endear him to his partners, but seems a far more rewarding task to the man Billy Bragg once described as "a pop star 24 hours a day."

If Bono still hasn't found what he's looking for, Ian has no such problems. His fate was sealed when, as an insecure thirteen-year-old from an unspectacular background in working-class Liverpool, he saw David Bowie performing "Starman" on Top of the Pops. Over a decade later, the same Ian McCulloch remarked, "I've looked up to David Bowie all my life but now I think he should look up to us," and it was reported in bold type. Through his reputation as a quotable interviewee and his own memorable Top of the Pops performance (ripping his shirt to expose his nipples) and landing a first top ten hit with "The Cutter" two weeks later—Mac became a true star.

Now the group is on the verge of a similar breakthrough in the States and Ian is receiving the same kind of adulation that came his way when he flirted with the pin-up appeal in Britain. Two nights previously in Philadelphia, he had been screamed at, had had underwear thrown at him, and was stage-rushed by young girls in a manner more fitting for a clean-cut pop idol than for someone like Ian.

He sees the humorous side of girls screaming every time he turns his back and waggles, and admits that he wouldn't do it were it not for the response. "But you play a song that's good because you know you're going to get applause at the end. I think it's great; that's what I always liked about Jagger. You do it because one night you did it and it felt good. It's good to see people moving to their own music and because I'm restricted somewhat by playing guitar, the opportunities I get to do that I magnify a little bit more by doing it more manically."

But Ian's self-fulfilling stardom is as down to earth as the rest of the group's. Whether it's walking home to the hotel from a sold-out show at Radio City, or going into a bar full of Bunnymen fans after a show, the group has refused to embrace the star machine. "People see it as an approachability, but I think if I was totally approachable then when I walked into half these places they'd just totally swarm," Ian says. "They do sense a kind of distance, maybe because the kind of approachability I have is always one with a screen in front of it."

"I think the Bunnymen display a kind of diffidence—a nonchalant acceptance of what you're going through, a kind of lazy attitude to the roles you're playing. And I think that's what we've always been—very diffident."

On their first American tour in 1981, Echo and the Bunnymen and U2 played the same Midwestern city one night and compared notes: a Homesick Bunnymen were touring for three weeks that felt like an eternity; U2 was touring for three and a half months which was all they had ever wanted.

Even now the Bunnymen insist on keeping tours to a minimum, even taking a two-week holiday in

the middle of their current American trip. All four of them are either married, engaged, or, in the case of Ian and Les, fathers to young daughters. And the strain only gets harder: Les's girlfriend is upset not to find him in his room when she phones after shows ("You go out. Other than look at a ceiling in a hotel room, what are you gonna do?"); Will compares touring to being in the army; Pete has his fiancée with him and as a result is almost totally non-communicative; and Ian speaks of the emotional differences between the family that is the band and the family that is in Liverpool.

And after nine years, there is an enormous strain on intergroup relationships. Echo and the Bunnymen have almost split up numerous times, and though their live show may be at a peak, Ian questions whether that is enough. "It's like a marriage. If all it is is when you shag it's fantastic but everything else is shit, you get divorced. You don't do it just for the shagging. Two of us are married, and I could do without the kind of crap that's going on."

"I used to believe a lot more in the notion of the group. I just don't see the equation that used to exist. It was me plus Will plus Les plus Pete equalled Echo and the Bunnymen. And that isn't necessarily the case now. Certain relationships have changed, and I much prefer being closer to Will than Pete, because there's a lot more to Will. And if it's taken nine years to get around to that, that's fine. And when the group packs it in, I'd sooner have Will as a mate."

There have been times when Ian spoke even worse of Will than he now does of Pete; he admits to possessing a hurtful character but seems unable to prevent saying things. Perhaps his current support for the group's musical director is a result of the previous night, when, after the rarity of all the band members returning to the hotel bar for a drink, Will did the unheard of and visited Ian in his room for a heart-to-heart. All of a sudden the future looks bright.

"Will is more enthusiastic than he's ever been," says Ian. "And I am. Everything in my life is related to the need to do it. And it's not really to prove anything. It's just... 'eat shit.'"





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Almost ten years ago, Patti Smith retired from rock 'n' roll at the height of her popularity and moved to Detroit. She made this unprecedented change without a word. Today, Patti is recording a new album for Arista Records, to be released sometime this year. In March 1979, she sat down with her friend and confidant, Beat writer William S. Burroughs, for perhaps her most intimate interview ever, unpublished until now.

# WHEN PATTI ROCKED

Interview by William S. Burroughs

Patti Smith has been on the rock 'n' roll scene forever: first as a serious fan off in the wilds of New Jersey, later as a hipster in San Francisco, a writer collaborating with artists like Sam Shepard and Tom Verlaine, an *enfant terrible* on the New York poetry scene, and as a journalist for Creem. Her interview with Keith Richards is a classic: she asked him one question, then picked up her gear and split.

By 1973, Patti was performing poetry on stage with the likes of Ann Waldman and Dick Higgins. While they stood stock-still, intoning their verses with the monotony of high school English teachers, Patti came on like a cross between Tristan Tzara and Little Richard, swinging what hips she had,

tossing her hair, and singing her poems like there was a Motown beat there, just behind each line.

When she added Lenny Kaye on guitar, the poetry turned to physical song, mineral song, and she turned the downtown poetry and music scene on its head, sacrificing nothing, but expanding the temple, letting light in through the windows, and opening the door for the likes of Chrissie Hynde.

Her independent single, "Piss Factory," recorded while she was still working, stocking books at the Gotham Book Mart, inspired the first generation of punks, seers, and methedrine mystics and led to her signing with Arista Records.

*Horses*, released in 1975, remains one of the bright spots of the Seventies and defined a moment

with a sense of joy, anger, and freedom. None of her subsequent records (*Radio Ethiopia*, *Easter, Wave*) lived up to that wild moment, but each was filled with a daring and a vision that remains unmatched and unchallenged.

This interview was conducted in William Burroughs' loft in the Bowery, two blocks from CBGB's, in March of 1979. Burroughs' place, (affectionately referred to as The Bunker because it had once been a YMCA locker room, and was still bleak and devoid of windows or light) proved a good confessional, and Burroughs an excellent Father Confessor.

Burroughs had first met Patti in 1974, when he returned to NYC after living outside the U.S. for







Michael D'Adamo/Reina Ltd.

twenty years. There is a fond, respectful, friendship that's endured to this day. It was conducted at a time when Patti was questioning the music industry and her place within it, and at a time when she was taking serious stock of her life and her work. Up until that point they had been one.

This was Patti Smith's last interview before leaving the music business.

In March of 1980, she married Fred "Sonic" Smith, formerly of the MC5, and moved to Detroit to begin a new life.

**Smith:** When I entered rock 'n' roll, I entered into it in a political sort of way, not as a career. I don't know if this is off the track, but I entered it because I

felt that rock 'n' roll, after the death of a lot of the Sixties people, and after the disillusionment of a lot of people after the Sixties and the early Seventies, people really just wanted to be left alone for a little while.

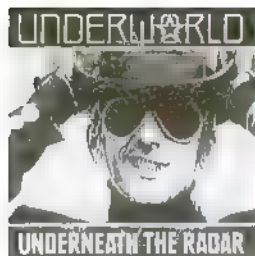
I didn't panic at first in 1970-71, even '72. I felt that maybe people were recharging. But when '73 came around, and early '74, it was just getting worse and worse, and there was no indication of anything new, of anyone regathering their strength and coming back to do anything. I felt that it was important for some of us that had a lot of strength to initiate some new energy.

Because I hadn't done anything in the Sixties, but worked privately, I felt that it was a time for me to

do something. All I really hoped to do was initiate some response from other people. I didn't have any aspirations of a career, or anything like that.

I look at the world, I get very broken-hearted about what happens in the world. I hate to see people hurt. I see what's happening with Iran, and I'm mostly worried that Iran will lose its culture, or that somebody will destroy [Sufi poet] Rumi's grave. I worry about things that are not, I suppose, really so important to anybody.

But the things that I was involved with politically in America, were very simple things having to do with the minds of teenagers, and how they were being shaped. I feel that when I was a teenager, I was very lucky. I grew up out of the John F. Kenne-



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dy, Bob Dylan, Rolling Stones era, and there was a lot of food for thought in those times. There were a lot of things that inspired me, not so much activistly [sic], but my mind was constantly fertile. And I felt that in the early-middle Seventies, there wasn't much happening at all to stimulate the minds of the new generations. The radio was like the Fifties again, the alternative radio that we had built up in the Sixties was becoming very business-oriented, and programmed like a glorified Top Forty. And there was no centralized communication ground for the youth of the future, no sense of unity at all in the country, and I felt that—

Burroughs: Do you feel that there is now?

Smith: I don't feel so much there is now, but I think there's more possibility for it to happen. I think that there's a re-awakening of the spirit of the kids. I mean, I'm not a nostalgic person. I've no desire to look back and moan about the Sixties. I look forward to the Eighties and Nineties.

But I think, simultaneously, kids are getting stirred up. I feel that in my own way, I was able to at least put a stick in the coals a little. Now it's '79 and I'm still involved in this thing, but it's come to a point in my life that, like you said, I have to stop and say, "What am I doing?" It's getting to the point now where, after having a hit single and having certain amounts of success and having people gravitate towards me because I have a success potential—it's time for me to really try to understand exactly what I'm doing.

'Cause I didn't start doing what I was doing to build myself a career. And I find myself at a time in my life when, if I'm not careful, that's exactly what's gonna be built for me. Or what I could find myself working for is other people's ideas of my career.

On the other hand, I'm a very strong person. I mean, all these things happened, but I feel like I've just pulled out of a time of temptation. I don't feel like I've ever sold out or done anything that I'm ashamed of, but I feel that I have entered into a period of temptation. And that's why I've been very quiet for about a year, because I've had to think about what I'm doing. Initially, all I wanted out of life was to communicate with myself and most of all, to achieve perfect communication with another person—as well as doing great work. To do great work, and thus communicate with myself, but most of all, to be able to honestly communicate with another person, totally...totally. Telepathically, or whatever.

I've no desire to be like some movie star and leave a trail of husbands behind me, you know?

Burroughs: Yeah.

Smith: I feel like I don't want to bullshit the people, and I don't like to be bullshitted either. I don't like any abstract, cow-like adoration for no reason. But I've often said, and I still find it the best way to describe it, it's like a very ecstatic, mutual kind of vampirism that you have to have with the people. Sometimes, I need their energy, and especially after my injury, when I was first trying to learn how to be on the stage again, I was not only afraid, but my energy...I couldn't really move around so much. I mean, you were at one of those performances when I was starting to get back [CBGB's, 1977]. I hadn't been out of bed for a few months, and I was addicted to pills, or whatever, and had to be carried on to the stage....

I remember getting on the stage and I was thinking, "This was crazy, to do this show. I can't even walk, I'll have to sit." And I had them put a chair on





the stage, and I thought, "Well, they won't mind if I sit on the chair." Their energy, their psychic and spiritual, as well as physical energy, lifted me up.

**Burroughs:** Would you say it contributed to your recovery?

**Smith:** I felt that it did. These doctors told me, "If you're not operated on, you'll never perform again." Well, I refused to be operated on. I didn't believe any of that stuff, but I was on so much Percodan and things... And it was getting to a point after a couple of months where I really started wondering, having never injured myself before... I couldn't even get to the bathroom.

Well, those nine days that I spent with the people [the "Out of Traction/Back in Action" shows], doing a couple of sets a night at CBGB's, around Easter time in '77, was the best therapy that I had. I took my [neck-brace] collar off by the end of it. I

couldn't stand it. It was real. I don't quite understand it myself, but I don't find it overly mystical.

**Burroughs:** This injury occurred in Tampa, right?

**Smith:** Yes.

**Burroughs:** I had one of the worst performances of my life in Tampa.

**Smith:** That particular performance was the culmination of one of my three periods. Performing was something new to me. After the initial stage of performing, where like I said, my first aspirations were political, in my own kind of way, then I found it got beyond that. I went beyond, because my politics are very simple. Basically, I just wanted to inspire kids, get 'em off their ass, get 'em thinking, get 'em pissed off, as pissed off as I was. Get them to look around at what was going on, even in the simplest

way. Just get them to ask a few questions. You know, interject a little extra joy and pain into their lives.

But after a while, I got very intoxicated with the ritual of performing. I have great pride that I feel that our group, more than any other group at this time—except for the new kids who are experimenting—as a rock 'n' roll band, had more guts than any other rock 'n' roll band. It's that we always attempt something beyond what we can do, every night, which is excruciatingly painful for most of the band. For me, it's a joy. For, I'd say for half the band, it's a joy, and half the band, it's total pain to have to shoot beyond themselves in that kind of pressure situation, in front of people. But that was part of the rules of coming into our band.

I mean, I formed the band with my eyes open, but each guy had to have his eyes open too—that we were going to attempt things that were perhaps not always the thing to do in order to perpetuate ourselves as rock 'n' stars. They had to understand that we were going for certain things that were sometimes going to be detrimental to our advancement in the social and business circles of rock 'n' roll. And it was very tough.

**Burroughs:** Well, the same question arises with painting, or with writing—

**Smith:** Yeah, but the thing is, when you're painting, or you're writing, you make that decision, and it's your own decision. But in a rock 'n' roll band, you're involved in a lot of different people's lives. And a lot of money's involved.

**Burroughs:** You're involved in a whole organization—your agent, the members of the band, all kinds of people.

**Smith:** These have actually been the hardest years of my life, because I was so idealistic about rock 'n' roll. I loved it so much, and I thought it was like, you know, the people's art. I really believed that of it. And because I believed it so much, I wasn't prepared for—even though it is true that a lot of people tried to prepare me—I wasn't at all prepared for the corruption within.

**Burroughs:** Well Patti, that's certainly implicit in the large amounts of money involved. Wherever there are those sums of money involved, there will be corruption. That's just par for the course.

**Smith:** And I don't even feel bitter. I don't always blame the corruptors, I blame the corrupted as much as the corruptors. I mean, I would say the corruptors are usually stronger than those corrupted, that's why people get corrupted—but we still have the option not to be corrupted. And I've had that option, that's the one thing that I did do. And when I first got a record contract, my record contract was one of the most unusual contracts of its time [1975], because although I got a lot of money for what is called a poet in those days—not so much money as they give kids now, but at the time, it was a lot of money and a lot of faith put into me—but I also got full artistic control of what I did. I mean, I don't think even Bob Dylan had that, I mean, at the time [of his first contract].

And although all these years have been a fight, I still always in the end get what I want, if I can hold out long enough. The truth of the matter is, managers and record company presidents and everybody, all these people have offered me things.

For instance, this last record [Wave, Arista 1979] was done two months ago. It still isn't out because I had to have long discussions with the people who

were involved in this aspect of my life. And some of them really cared about me, in their own way. But all of them have a very different definition of success than I do. That's made it very difficult.

See, I feel right now, it's like... how we're talking now is different than how I used to daydream that we would talk, you know—

But it doesn't really matter. Actually, I'm very exhausted, because I've just spent two months in almost a psychic kind of a war, between myself and the people who are helping to perpetuate my records. And I actually have respect for these people, even though I fight them. A lot of people would call me naïve because I respect these people that I have to fight, but I still respect the fact that these people are my investors. But they try to get aesthetically involved with what I do, and it holds up my work.

They might even be right in some of the things that they suggested, because what they're trying to do for me is make me a lot of money, and make me what they say is a big star—and also make themselves everything, but they have my interest in mind.

Burroughs: That's their function.

Smith: But I must protect—I mean, I have to feel like I can stand behind the work that I do, flawed or not. I can stand behind a piece of flawed work that was done with integrity; sometimes it's tough, but I can take it, 'cause I know there's a future. I know that I'll do another piece of work, that sometimes a piece of work is a springboard to the next piece of work. I can accept that.

Burroughs: Well, you've spoken of that, and also of the fact that your orchestra is trying to do something that's just a little bit beyond it; well, this implies that you're going somewhere. If you talk of a springboard, you're going from here to here—or you talk of the band playing a little beyond, surely that means that there would be something beyond that, and beyond that.

Smith: I look to my future with so much joy, because I am at the most wonderful... I mean, superficially, my whole life's on crazy ground. You know I've moved to Detroit. It's wrenching to—I mean, I've lived in New York City for twelve years. I've struggled and built a certain emotional tabernacle here, some kind of tabernacle that represents my work here.

And I'm very proud of the work I did here. I feel that I did good work in this City. And I love this City, you know. To leave New York was a very tough thing. But I did it with great joy, too—you know, like a pioneer. It's like you have to "Go West!" I've always been a very East Coast girl. I was raised in South Jersey—Philly, Camden, all the coolest cities. Actually, though, when I was a teenager I thought that the coolest city wasn't New York, it was Detroit—because I was from the Motown, and stuff...

But the thing is, I'm very happy because I have met the person in my life that I've been waiting to meet since I was a little girl. I feel that I have met that person. I always believed that I would meet that person. It was my greatest dream, to meet the person who I recognized as my person. And it came late in my life, I mean later than I thought. I

thought it would be the person I met when I was sixteen, you know...

And that person is open to me. For the first time, I'm not pursuing—the person has opened up to me another way to express myself truly, which is music. And even though I've been dealing in rock 'n' roll, and always thinking of myself as sort of a spokesman kind of person....

Burroughs: Well Patti, just regarding me as someone who knows very little—as I do know very little—about music and what's going on now, just give me a little talk. Tell me what's going on, and where things are going.

Smith: There isn't anything to know. The Seventies basically were a period where different people were trying to take a throne, you see? The only people that were interesting at all—not always even anyone that I liked—were people like David Bowie. And I don't demean David Bowie, in fact some of his work has been inspirational to me, but he's still... he's not an American. You know, he doesn't move me. I don't want to say anything negative, because he does enough positive things that make him worthwhile to me. But he didn't excite me in the Seventies. I think what it was, was a hunger that we didn't know that a lot of us had. We all felt loneliness as a hunger for something to happen. As we thought we were lonely, a group like Television thinks they're alone. The boys that later became the Sex Pistols thought they were alone. All of us people that should have been perpetuating, or helping to build on, the Sixties, we were dormant. And we all thought we were alone.

Our credo was, "Wake up!" I've said this before, but just to tell you, in case you haven't read or anything: I wanted to be like Paul Revere. That was my whole thing. I wanted to be like Paul Revere. I didn't want to be a giant big hero, I didn't want to die for the cause. I didn't want to be a martyr. All that I wanted was for people to fuckin' wake up. That's all I wanted them to do, and I feel that that's what happened.

Burroughs: Well, as you say that this is what happened. You have the whole punk generation, essentially, who are anti-heroes. See, they're rejecting the old values, because having been woken up, they realize that all this nonsense that they've been brought up on is nonsense. And all these standards. And they're rejecting those standards. So we could regard them, if you will, as something that you have been instrumental in creating.

Smith: I still believe in genius. I don't give a fuck, I don't agree with these kids. I believe in heroes. See, I love these kids, but I think that I've spawned a lot of little monsters, though, sometimes. Because I don't feel the same way they do. I don't think it's cool to shoot yourself up with heroin at 21 years old and die. I don't think it's cool to die at 21, you know.

I don't want to be dead. I would exist forever. I love life, and I love being on Earth. I love being an Earthling. I don't revel in the death of these people. I don't love Jimi Hendrix because he died. I loved what he did when he was most alive, you know, and consulting the gods on stage. That's what I loved. I don't have any interest in him consulting the gods to the death. I couldn't witness that. I could only experience that.

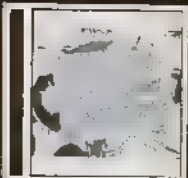
I think that what people thought of the New Wave—after it became the New Wave—got to be such a media and fashion-oriented, imagistic kind

Continued on page 81

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## HEADS from page 52

happening faster than you can think about them. And at that moment, it's like a mystical experience. I think we've all occasionally had those moments, and I know we've shared some because coming off stage, everyone would be in the same mood.

**David Byrne:** Sometimes I think of myself more as an appreciator or a facilitator than a creator, or that sometimes the act of creation isn't creating something in a strict sense; it's more like allowing something to happen. For me, to be known as innovative is kind of a blessing and a curse. It's a stupid Western kind of pressure, and it's that whole need for something new. Always to make something new, I think it's a very Western and European kind of neurosis that's been put on us. And yet eventually, I admit that I'm afflicted with it, and I can't get out of it. It's a blessing too, because I really enjoy it. When something new happens, it's like a new thing has come into the world. And you feel like you're somehow responsible, but not really. You've helped to cause it, but somehow it takes on a life of its own. And so it's kind of a wonderful thing to witness. And you kind of scratch your head and say, "Well, where did that really come from? I didn't plan everything out." It's great.

**SPIN:** Nowadays musicians from all over the world can hear each other's music. African and Cuban and Caribbean musicians are doing their things in London, Paris, and New York. At the beginning of the Eighties, someone like me, who might not have had the chops of an indigenous player, nonetheless came from your world, so to speak, and I could understand you. Did you used to find in the past, or do you still find, that musicians from other styles have had difficulty moving beyond what they "know"?

**David Byrne:** Exactly. From both sides. Musicians from Third World cultures and musicians like ourselves, or like myself, had difficulty coming out of what we knew. Not everything that we have tried along the lines of cultural blending, or whatever you want to call it, has been successful. And part of it was because some musicians, and we too, get set in our ways, stuck with the style that we know, and it's difficult to be flexible. And sometimes I feel that we're changing, that we're finding a common ground and a kind of common language. Not that the music's all going to get smoothed over and sound the same everywhere, but I think that we're finding that some musicians anyway are more willing to step outside what they know, the musical grammar that they know, and talk, if not in somebody else's language, at least with an accent.

I think that now, particularly in Paris and London, there are a lot of musicians from Third World countries who are more familiar than they used to be with pop songs, funk, and all that kind of stuff. There's a lot more mixing going on than there used to be. And I think it's starting to happen in New York, but it's not as prevalent as it is in those other cities. I think it's always going to be more difficult in America, because in America there's so much indigenous music, whereas both France and Britain have a history of borrowing styles from other places; and learning how to do it. Britain is always taking rock 'n' roll or blues or lately they've all been playing funk and stuff like that, and most of those styles come from America. And they have a history of appreciating things that are outside of their own sphere, and then making them their own, adding a different kind of intelligence to it, and selling it back to us. And I think the French, though

they don't play it themselves as much, are great appreciators of music from other places.

**SPIN:** I work with people who grow up playing their idioms all their lives, to get the experience they need to become able to project something that really has more depth in the way they do something. This is something you can see in these traditional places. Out there, wherever you go, there are people who are great musicians. You're looking at their musicianship, and you're looking at your own anxieties, saying, "Well, am I really up to this?"

**Chris Frantz:** I know that at one time, I guess it was when we were rehearsing the first time with the big band, with Bernie Worrell and Steve Scales and Busta Jones, you know, I was really nervous because I was in awe of the way these guys could play. And it was, "Wow, I'm actually playing with a funk guy." I was on edge all the time. Now I guess that I just have more confidence. Maybe I can play a little bit better; maybe I'm more relaxed. But I just don't feel intimidated by people, even if they're great, because I guess I realize that sometimes great works are not necessarily done by the best players.

**David Byrne:** I think that technically I'm about the same. But my ears have developed. Well, you know, I can't play any faster or any better, really, but I can listen better, hear better. I know more, and I can relax into different styles much better than I used to be able to do. I think that I can feel at home doing it, but not that I'm a better player. Somebody else could probably play it better, but I think I can kind of slip in and out of things.

**"Some days I feel: Wow, if we could just have a song that sounded as joyful as K.C. & The Sunshine Band the first time I heard them, then we'd really be doing something."**

**Jerry Harrison:** When you grow up and you're playing other people's songs, at that point, you always understand that the secret is to work and become a better musician, and you automatically do that. But I think that what happens then is, as you said, it's as if your fingers do the walking. Once your fingers are able to play all those licks, they automatically play those licks; and sometimes you never get beyond what your fingers can do. For me, what I learned in the Modern Lovers was this idea of "Get back to what you're saying." You've got something that you want to say, and it's an important thing, and you feel it with some intensity.

**SPIN:** Do you have a message, or a "true story," so to speak, out of or inside of which you think your music is accomplishing or trying to express something? Do you think that music can be a vehicle for a message?

**Jerry Harrison:** What I've been dwelling on is how music is everywhere. Rock music is almost becoming Muzak, you know, when the Beatles "Revolution" is a Nike commercial. And there's something kind of debasing about it; that is, it all starts to seem meaningless.



# THE CURE IN ORANGE

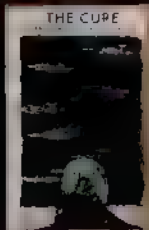
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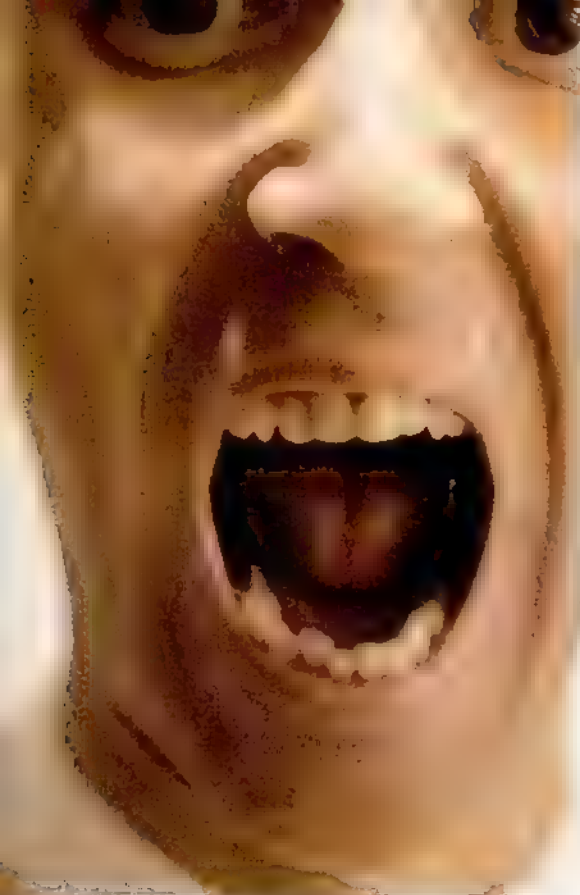


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Peter Anderson

**Tina Weymouth:** We don't feel comfortable with proselytizing. You'll have to ask David, because he's the lyricist, and then we maybe can articulate on it.

**David Byrne:** These kinds of concerns come through mainly in the singing and the lyrics. I think I adapt them, depending on the kind of music that the band's doing. I think I adapt the lyrics, the style of writing, to fit the mood of the music. I try to. But I don't think it does it in a direct way. I don't think it does it in a way where it's stated. I don't think it's about—What the hell is it about? Well, I just think this is a hard time for a lot of people. Often, it's just about telling people that it's all right. It's saying, "It's all right, you're not alone." Or sometimes it's giving, I think, encouragement, in a way. It's giving encouragement, but not in obvious ways. The words to the songs don't say, "You can do it; go ahead; go forth." The words aren't like that, but it's more by example or by feeling or something that it comes through. That's what I get from people who talk to me about it. They say that they've gotten some kind of strength out of some of the material in the past, and that it has helped them sometimes when they've had difficult times.

It's very difficult to deal directly with issues and points in a song. I think that has happened occasionally, where a song has addressed something and acted as a catalyst for people to focus, or redirected the focus of people. But I think most of the time it's more subtle than that. A song kind of gets into your whole attitude and way of thinking, but it's not about a specific issue. Just opening things up, and being receptive to other things, other ideas, other kinds of music, other ways of thinking, and then we would hope that sets

the ball in motion, and then each individual crisis takes care of itself, or it's taken care of. Maybe the music works on that level.

**Jerry Harrison:** I think that Bob Marley is one of the only people who's ever done overtly political music and not sounded foolish.

**David Byrne:** Music helps people put things in order. I think it does. I think it helps them—not in any one aspect of the music—it's kind of in the totality of the music, of the words and the beats and the sound and the texture and all of that come together. It sometimes helps people use it; they can use it in some way, whatever, as an allegory or a model or something in their life in a very natural or unconscious way. And I think it sometimes helps people to put some order to the things that have been happening to them, things that for all intents and purposes just seem chaotic.

**Tina Weymouth:** The thing that I keep coming up against is how much people feel that they're just going to live out their little lives. Not that they're not valid or important to their friends and loved ones, but it's that they just can't make an impression on big government, and there's just such a bigger thing happening in the world than them. What they get on TV news, etcetera, is that they just can't make a mark in this world. And the impression that I keep getting from people when I meet them is, "Wow, well, you're an individual; you're just like me; and what you represent to me is your individuality, your ability just to be a person and do what you like, and to think openly and clearly for yourself." Especially from someone who is working for a company, "You're your own boss; that's great. You have some kind of control over your life." Being an individual as opposed to being a sheep-follower. They're looking for: he got away with it. He did it and he got away with it. And that's why, when they think we're funny, that's what they are laughing about. They're saying, "How can he be so weird and not conform?" And it's like that in our whole business, the music business itself. "How can they keep selling records without having hit singles?"

**Chris Franz:** To tell you the truth, my feelings about it change from day to day. To be honest, some days I feel like we're setting a great example, for other young musicians, and we're a really admirable group. Other days I feel that maybe we're letting people down because we haven't toured, and maybe we're sort of living in an ivory tower. Other days I feel: Wow, if we could just have a song that sounded as happy and as joyful as K.C. and the Sunshine Band the first time I heard them, then we'd really be doing something. So from day to day my feelings change, with my body chemistry, I suppose.

**Tina Weymouth:** We're not like Ziggy Marley, who is like a prophet who has a mission, you know. The whole Rastafarian thing, it's like a vision he has of—well, really what it is about is bringing up pride and human dignity.

**David Byrne:** I envy that. I mean, I envy that, because then everything has a focus and a purpose. And I feel that—I know for myself—I often kind of feel along as we go, and there's a pattern. In retrospect a pattern emerges, but it's not there a lot of the time.

**SPIN:** I know a lot of people in Ghana who would have stood forth and been happy and proud and

considered it a glorious death to die in Bob Marley's place. A lot of people. They would have just done it without even hesitating. But we live in a different kind of society. What do you think about this society and the role of music in it? And what you're doing, do you feel that you're doing important work?

**David Byrne:** I hope so. Without being immodest, I think that in a small way, and not in an obvious way, you can change the way people think about things. I think people are going through difficult times—and I don't mean just homeless people in the street and the farmers—I mean spiritually, that people, even kids, that they're not sure about things. I'm not sure they have as much optimism about where things are headed as they might have had. And I find that it bothers me that a lot of music is treated as a commodity. You can deal with that when it's in the business, but when the listener starts talking about it that way, then you feel like there's trouble. When people talk about music as a thing or whatever, instead of being something that they can identify with as being part of their lives and speaking to them, or when it stops doing that, then music just ceases to have meaning. And I think there's a danger of that happening. And it's odd, because a lot of music can still be exciting and can still generate feelings, but it's like pushing a button, and then the motor goes. And I feel as if that sometimes happens. It happens all the time. It's not just now, but I just feel it a lot now. I can't sermonize. It's more like asking questions and asking myself, "Why do I feel this way?" And if I'm feeling this way, then obviously a lot of other people will be, too. I'm not so special and unique that I'm the only one having these feelings.



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**Jerry Harrison:** The audiences I know as Talking Heads audiences are mainly the audiences I remember from when we were a smaller band, because those are the audiences that I could see closely when we played in clubs. The lights were on, and you could see them. The Talking Heads was one of the first bands to say, "Hey, you don't have to be someone you aren't; it's OK just to be yourself and do a good job at being yourself." ●



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boats look like one huge armada of floating sin. Yeah, Rock that Boat! Even the scenery is right out of a Walt Disney animator's vision of tropical paradise. Everywhere you drive there are long bridges over vast expanses of bright aqua-green water, giving you the feeling you're skimming two feet above the water. Lush green islands are over there, scattered with mansions that come with sea planes in the garages. Majestic ocean liners wait over there for the weekend to come to haul ass outside of U.S. territorial limits and let everyone on board gamble the nights away. Never have I been to a place that inspired so much envy. Even the black ghetto of Overtown looks like a downscale retirement park, inspiring one to wonder why anyone would want to riot here, until you realize that Miami is about having more. And the more everyone seems to get, the less the black population seems to have. In a town that wherever you look, the next guy or gal is ten times better looking than you, in a better car, a better boat, in better

clothes, all looking over their shoulder at someone who is ten times better looking than them, in a better car, a better... Being the low man on the totem pole is enough to make you want to blow it all away. The sin of Miami Beach is that it promises you the world. Because in Miami, where the cash for every fantasy is just a couple hours airtime to Columbia or Bolivia away, it ALL seems POSSIBLE.

I realized that staying in Miami Beach meant waking with the DTs forever. Scott drove, Karen and I slept, and at sun-up the next morning, we woke in the middle of Big Cypress Swamp.

A huge Confederate flag was flying overhead. Scott, plagued by mosquitoes all night, was grumpy until he saw the flag. "I got to shoot this." He went to the trunk of the car to get his tripod. At that instant, a long-haired swamp rat appeared down the road. He had a gun but held it relaxed until he saw Scott's tripod, which resembled a 50-calibre machine gun.

The swamp rat pointed his gun, aimed and ready. Scott was oblivious to the bead on his back. At the front end of the car, another rifle trained on

us brought Scott to his senses.

"A black fuckin' powder musket!!!" For the first time, he handed me his camera gear. The guys with the guns turned out to be brothers, and claimed they could make a cup of coffee "that'll send you home to slap mom." Karen, out of her element, was terrified. Scott was thrilled. I was like a pig in shit, but when they started talking about using nigger babies for alligator poaching, I picked up the musket and pointed it in the wrong direction. We were asked to leave, at gunpoint. I still wanted to stay. I like swamps.

On the way back to Miami Beach on Rte. 48, traffic stopped. A huge alligator lay in the road. I got out my net and prodded it to the weeds by the side of the road. The gator turned and snapped, holding its tail in readiness.

A bored voice came from a pickup truck. "Leave the alligator alone."

Dreamie was having an Outlaw Party the next night. I met her after Hurricane Floyd wimped out. It was at the bar at the Edison Hotel, when drinks were two for one, and no one else with money was around.

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of thing, that the initial reason for it got all distorted.

Burroughs: But do you feel, then, that the whole music scene is going to progress?

Smith: What's important is that there are, I hate to call it this, more imposters, than ever. I never think that anybody should do art unless they're a great artist. I think that people have the right to express themselves in the privacy of their own home, but I don't think they should perpetuate it on the human race unless they've really decided that it was something that would help in the advancement of the human race—at least in a pleasurable kind of manner.

You know what I mean. It doesn't mean I don't like reading Mickey Spillane, or pornography books.... It used to be that art was unquestionably art. And I think that we have to get back into that frame, but that thing can only happen again by the eruption of like at least ten great people at once. I want to live in an illuminated time.

**"I don't have any desire to live on a planet that has no heroes, and no angels, and no saints, and no art."**

Burroughs:—But you know, everyone isn't as optimistic as you are.

Smith: Well, maybe that's my main gift, you know. I mean, I know that people aren't, especially men. I know that things have become so corrupt that the more... I also think that's the one card I have in being female. I'm talking in a gender kind of way, but only in a certain kind of way, not in the act of creation. I mean, I wouldn't talk to you about gender, if we were talking about performing properly, or the act of doing work. I understand that it's important to go beyond your gender in that process. But I'm proud to be the same gender as Anna Mag-nani, you know? I know that women, by the basis of our makeup, we perpetuate civilization, and we have to be optimistic. We have to believe in the future, or else... since we're the ones who bear the children of the future, we have to feel we're not setting them to light on a volcano. You don't want to bear a child and then drop it in a volcano. You want to bear a child and put him in paradise.

Burroughs: Yes, a lot of women do feel that way, I mean, they do feel that they don't want to bear children at this time.

Smith: But some of us have, you know. I, for instance, bore a child twelve years ago. This child's alive somewhere. I've a very Spartan feeling about it. I have no desire to meet her, or to raise her, or to have some kind of emotional reunion with her. But I would like for her to exist on a planet where there's space for her to develop her perceptions, I think that what can give more space is joy. I mean, I understand that, and I don't believe in having nine kids at this point. And I believe in the conservation of our planet. I'm not a Mexican Catholic, you know, I desire for the planet to go on, and not to see swans go extinct, and all that stuff....

But I don't have any desire to live on a planet that has no heroes, and no angels, and no saints, and no art. I'm not ashamed to say it. It's not very fashionable to think that way, I suppose, but the more un-

fashionable it becomes, the more angry, and the more strong I become in my position.

I was actually very heartbroken in the last few years, because I had to accept a lot of things about our planet and about, you know, realities. But still, like I said, just as we have the temptation to be corrupted, we have the strength to not be corrupted.

I like to think of those forty days when—I've talked to you about this before. The idea of Jesus. I haven't completely accepted that thing in my mind. I'm still, I can't just... the day that I totally accept Him is going to be a very wonderful day, if it happens, but I have to think about it still. I'm still exploring that guy. But one of the stories that I really like is when He, just at this period of time, went into the desert for forty days and wrestled with the Devil, you know, when they actually had a verbal and physical battle. Forty days of someone woodpeckering your spirit, is pretty....

Burroughs: Yeah, it's pretty harrowing.

Smith: And He came out of it. And so for me, whenever I think that I have it tough because I have to fight radio stations, or a record company or anything, I get pretty ashamed of myself when I think that this guy had to spend forty days without food or drink in the middle of a desert with the Devil... it doesn't seem like it's as painful as I make it out to be. But it does get to you.

#### MEGADETH from page 37

way will continue.

"Success?" Mustaine grins. "Sure, we're gonna start doing safe songs. Two we're working on for the next album are about AIDS and incest. Seriously, man, can anybody really imagine we're telling kids about things they don't know about, things they can't see for themselves? I mean, look around. Safe sex, which sure is putting a dent in my wallet, buying all those helmets, well, sure, laugh, but the black plague is what it is, man, and there's no way of stopping it. It's like we're living in the times of fiery hailstones, and the water turning to blood. The earth tremors in California are so frequent they aren't even considered news. And Armageddon's right around the corner. Do the people who want to silence bands like us, bands that aren't safe, really think they're gonna still be livin' in their condos in hell? We're the only ones with enough guts to come right out and say, fuck it, it's time the kids know what's gonna happen."

Tonight, the whole crowd is primed for Megadeth, and the intensely powerful units the band projected in Cleveland the night before, when they climaxed their set with the one-two punch of "Peace Sells" and "Anarchy," is there from the beginning.

After most of the audience has left, the band stays to talk with fans who have lingered. There are more breasts to be autographed, and Mustaine is looking so cocky, you can't help wondering if he's thought about achieving real stardom as seriously as he's thought about the integrity of his music and his vision.

"I don't really want to start thinking about that," says the General, shaking his strawberry locks out of his eyes. "Because if you set goals, you're just putting stop signs in your life. If there's a plateau that you want to reach, why not go for the next one? If I get into thinking like that, I always end up thinking about outer space. Where does outer space end? And if it does end, what's on the other fuckin' side?"

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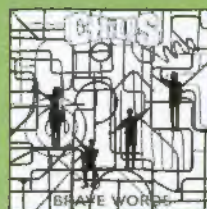


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# THE LOST ISSUE OF SPIN

What you missed while we were away.

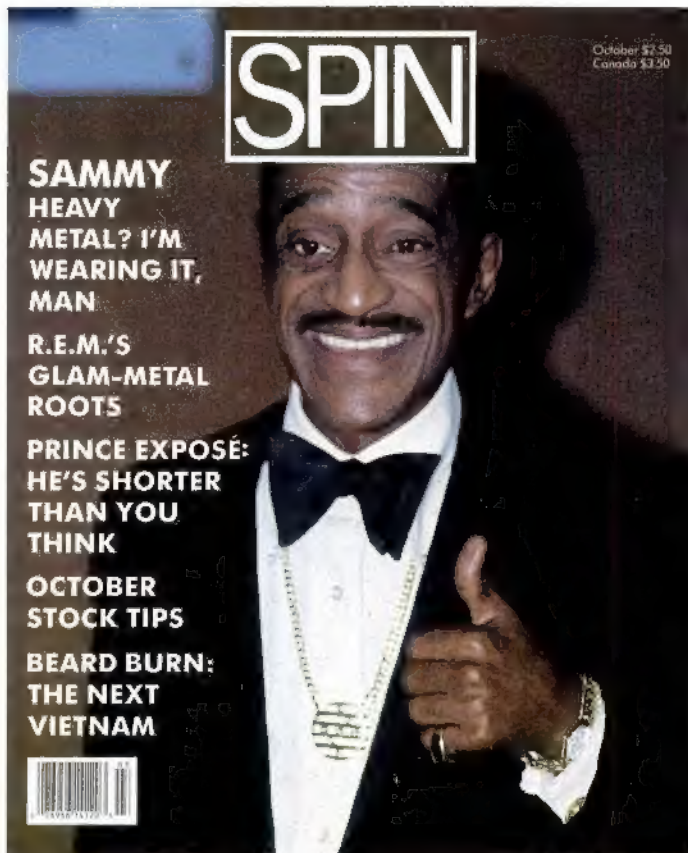
By Glenn O'Brien

Those of you who have been loyal SPIN readers may have noticed that there was no October '87 issue of the magazine. This was not an oversight on our part. Not only did we notice this omission, we were quite disturbed by it. It was bad enough missing an issue and disappointing our readers, but we also had to put up with rumors that the magazine had gone out of business, merged with *Women's Wear Daily*, or been bought up by the Beatrice Corporation.

There's no truth to any of these rumors. SPIN's business is better than ever. And to say that we simply forgot October is an out-and-out lie. The October issue was actually produced but it mysteriously failed to reach newsstands, convenience stores, and subscribers. Some have claimed that the publisher and editors of the magazine deliberately engineered this disappearance, some blame it on foul play from competitors within the magazine industry, but no one has been able to ascertain with absolute certainty what happened to the October issue. We would like to know more than anyone, but we would hope that those who go about spouting half-baked theories prove their claims or drop them. We are sure that the truth will come out and we ask anyone with information regarding this issue to please contact SPIN's Lost and Found Editor.

The October issue featured a strong cover portrait of Sammy Davis, Jr., marking the first time the public had seen him without his glass eye. Inside, he talked at length about his new heavy metal album, *Don't Fear the Candyman*.

Inside there was an extraordinary interview with Prince in which he names every woman he has ever known intimately and rates the Beaujolais Nouveau crop of 1988. Regular contributor Legs McNeil visited the record stores of Albania which he found full of albums marked "for promotional use only." Sheena Easton authored a piece entitled "Beard Burn," on her experience playing Don Johnson's wife on "Miami Vice." Investigative reporter Ed Kiersh penned a stunning exposé of "The Living Death of Quiet Riot," revealing that one of the band members wears hair transplanted from a dead man. Also in the issue was our monthly Sting story.



Walter McBride/Retna Ltd

"Jung Americans," in which the singer analyzed the dreams of a panel of famous roadies. In short, it was a typical issue of SPIN.

There are several theories as to why the October issue never reached the readers, and I will list them in no particular order.

The September Theory: The September issue of SPIN featured the first cover story written by Bob Guccione, Jr., the publisher, editor, and design director of this magazine. (See masthead, p. 5.) The failure of the October issue to arrive at the newsstands insured that the September issue remained on those few newsstands where it did not sell out for up to a month longer than the usual issue.

The Weatherby Theory I: Gregg Weatherby, the managing editor, was

the last person to see the October issue of SPIN. He said in a telephone interview from the Cayman Islands that the trucks must have been hijacked. All he knows is that he woke up on the side of the road and couldn't remember anything. This is not an unusual occurrence with Weatherby, however, so hijacking cannot be assumed. The printer claims to have not been paid for the issue. Weatherby contends that he paid in cash and the receipt was taken along with the trucks of magazines. He says that the issue is rumored to be on sale in Cuba, explaining his trip to the Caribbean.

The Weatherby Theory II: He lost the entire press run in a crap game.

**The Insurance Theory:** Some say that the issue was deliberately ditched to collect on the Lloyds of London dis-

tribution insurance. Those espousing this theory point to the plush new offices of the magazine and the new duplex apartment occupied by the publisher.

**The Teamsters Theory:** Some say that the issue was seized by the truckers carrying it to market because a record review by Roger Egbert revealed the whereabouts of Jimmy Hoffa.

The China Theory: Agents of the People's Republic of China hijacked the issue because of an alleged resemblance between Sammy Davis, Jr., and the Dalai Lama.

The Rat Pack Theory: Agents of Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Peter Lawford, and Joey Bishop sabotaged the issue in an attempt to abort Sammy's foray into heavy metal. Critics of this theory point out that Peter Lawford is dead.

The Competition Theory: Some see the rising circulation and increased advertising pages in SPIN as a threat to other publications. Anonymous tipsters have suggested that various publications including the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Scanlans*, and *Apartment House Wrestling*, were behind the disappearance of the October issue. Malcolm Forbes has been unavailable for comment.

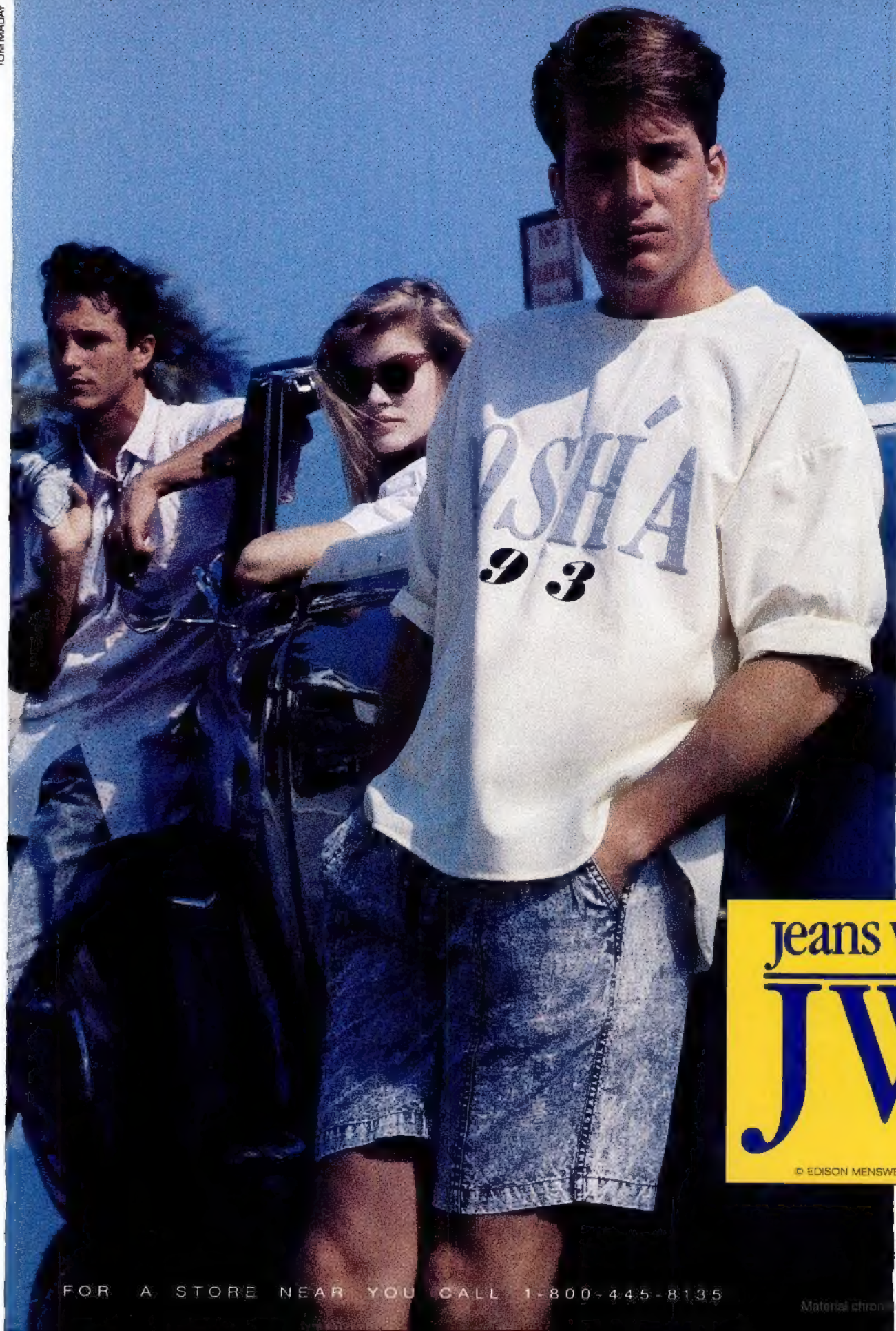
The Black Monday Theory: The month in which SPIN failed to appear was also the time of the largest stock market crash in history. Rumors within the publishing industry suggested that SPIN saw the crash coming and sank the entire October budget into strategic metals and frozen pork belly futures. These rumors were quashed when a single copy of the issue was found in a dumpster at the printer.

The Rug Theory: It has been suggested that one of the several toupee wearing rock stars mentioned in Ed Kiersh's article spent thousands of dollars to stop his secret from being revealed to the public. But a free press will not be denied, and in that spirit we are now naming those individuals:

Chris: I'll make him a Bob Fosse Bob.  
Brent: I'll make him a Bob Fosse Bob.

We apologize to our readers for this inconvenience and we would like to assure you that in the future, as long as SPIN is published, there will be an October issue right there where it belongs, between September and November.





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